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THE INDEPENDENT

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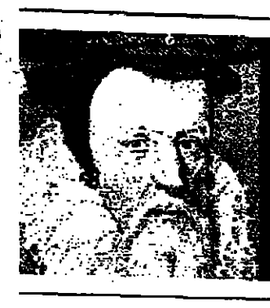

Essay

Tory Lords a-leaping

The Tabloid

Suzanne Moore on sexual de-selection

The Tabloid

Bridget Jones: Chocolate and the single girl

Britain's would-be Nazi queen

Steve Boggan and John Crossland

Wallis Simpson, the woman for whom Edward VIII abdicated, conducted secret negotiations with the Nazis in order to have herself installed as Queen of England "at any price", according to secret government papers released yesterday.

The Public Record Office documents confirm for the first time what historians have long suspected – that Edward, the Duke of Windsor, was a firm Nazi sympathiser and his American wife was a malign influence.

A memorandum released by the Foreign Office, 60 years after the abdication, provides the most startling evidence yet of the Windsors' willingness to collaborate with Hitler.

The couple had left Britain for neutral Portugal, but there were government concerns throughout the summer of 1940 that the Nazis might take Edward – by force or persuasion – with the intention of installing him as a puppet king in the event of an invasion.

The latest evidence suggests that force, at least on the part of the duchess, might not have been necessary. Dated 7 July 1940, it comes in the form of a memorandum from an informant inside occupied Czechoslovakia to Sir Alexander Cadogan, permanent secretary at the Foreign Office.

It says: "A new source in close touch with Von Neurath's [the German protector of Bohemia's] entourage in Prague has reported that the Germans expect assistance from the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, the latter desiring at any price to become Queen. The Germans have been negotiating with her since June 27.

"The status quo in England expect an understanding to form an anti-Russian alliance.

"The Germans propose to form an opposition government with the Duke of Windsor, having first changed public opinion by propaganda. The Germans think King George will abdicate during the attack on London."

Royal historians were not surprised by the contents of many of yesterday's papers – particularly those once again demonstrating the duke's pro-Nazi sympathies and his embarrassing comments and behaviour after being sent to act as Governor of the Bahamas in 1940. But the confirmation of Wallis Simpson's role in the affair was regarded as significant.

"This dots the i's and crosses the t's," said Harold Brooks-Baker, publishing director of *Burke's Peerage*.

"She was always regarded as bad news, particularly by the Americans. Roosevelt was always worried about Edward's Nazi leanings and considered her the best thing that ever happened – she stopped him having to deal with a pro-Nazi king."

The revelations also go some way to explaining the Queen Mother's life-long loathing of the duchess.

There are many more references, however, to the duke's aspirations and to his Nazi leanings.

One intelligence report from a Spaniard, Count Nava de Tajo, to British diplomats said that the duke believed there could be a revolution in Britain, resulting in the abdication of King George VI. He then hoped that a subsequent Labour government would invite him back to take the throne.

Later, a senior Foreign Office specialist covering America wrote to Sir David Douglas-Scott, assistant under-secretary of state, complaining about an interview the duke had given to an American newspaper arguing against US involvement in the war.

Clearly furious, he concludes: "I propose that he now be told of the harm that he has done, and strictly prohibited from giving any more interviews at all without having his texts vetted and authorised at home…[This] may help to correct the gaffe of sending him to this post. It – or any post near the USA – should have been the last chosen."

Duke and the Nazis, page 6

Nazi collaborator: Wallis Simpson negotiated with the Germans

Ministers fear maize breakout

Ian Burrell

Ministers have been warned that genetically-altered American corn is to enter the British food chain despite government safety objections.

Briefings prepared for ministers, and seen by *The Independent*, warn that the imports pose a risk to health. In a memo to John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Dr William Parish, of the DoE's Chemicals and Biotechnology Division, warned: "[The maize] will be imported shortly despite the fact that it is not authorised in an unprocessed form, and that the UK objected to proposals to

authorise it."

He added: "Given that the UK objected to the unrestricted marketing of genetically-modified(GM) maize, there is bound to be concern that the imported maize gluten feed represents a risk to human health and safety to the environment."

The new maize – known as Genetech Corn – is already being cultivated in America and government sources said little could be done to keep it out.

The DoE memo warns: "The UK has no control over the mixing of GM and non-GM maize in the USA. In practice, it is not possible to identify nor separate the GM maize once it arrives in the UK as a bulk commodity. Therefore, no one will know whether any particular shipment contains GM maize."

The Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) has objected to the GM corn on the grounds that it could compromise treatment of diseases in animals and humans.

The modified corn has been manipulated to be tolerant to herbicide and to poison insects which eat it, but it also contains a gene which is resistant to Ampicillin antibiotics.

There is concern at MAFF that if the GM maize was used in animal feeds it could lead to drug-resistant bacteria forming in the digestive system of livestock, compromising disease treatment in animals and humans.

Next week Mr Gummer will attend a meeting of the EC Environment Council at which permission for marketing the GM maize will be discussed. The council will consider research undertaken by the EC Scientific Committee on Food, the Scientific Committee on Animal Nutrition and the the Scientific Committee for Pesticides. Britain must abide by the council's decision.

Ciba-Geigy, the company which developed the genetically-modified maize seeds, is confident it will get approval to market the product.

Daniel Blancpain, worldwide Head of Ciba Seeds, said: "We agree with the Commission that no efforts should be spared in order to ensure that our product can be widely accepted and be met with confidence by the public."

When the GM maize is processed for human consumption, by boiling or cooking, it is believed to be safe.

However, MAFF asked the Laboratory of the Government Chemist to see if any of the DNA in the modified product would remain after processing.

The briefing states: "It appears that fragments can survive and MAFF are now seeking the views of independent experts … about whether this changes their view on the risk of processed maize."

QUICKLY

Major firm on EMU

The Prime Minister yesterday firmly nailed reports that he was prepared to jettison the agreed Cabinet line on the European single currency. Page 2

Food bug lawsuit

Seven children are suing the Government and other organisations after being infected by the food poisoning bug which has killed six in Scotland. Their families say the Government failed to warn of the dangers of the bacterium E-coli 0157. Page 2

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The next Miss Australia might just be a bloke

Beauty and the Bruce: Political correctness took a decisive turn yesterday when Brad Rodgers took his place with the other finalists in the Miss Australia contest. Attacks on the contest led to the beauty aspect being ditched in favour of other criteria includding raising charity funds. This allowe Mr Rodgers to qualify after he raised A$100,000 for the Spastics Society

Jewish civil war feared by Israelis

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

As hostility increases between secular and religious Israelis, a poll indicates that 47 per cent of Jews believe, with differing degrees of certainty, that the polarisation of their society may lead to a Jewish civil war.

According to a poll of 1,025 Jewish Israelis carried out by the Geocartographic Institute, it is secular Jews who feel under greatest threat. Some 51 per cent of them believe that there will be a civil war, compared to 38 per cent of religious Jews. Of the believers in a civil war, 30 per cent think it inevitable, 40 per cent probable and 24 per cent possible.

The problem is far more complicated than a simple division between secular and religious, between the fifth of the population which never goes to the synagogue and those who go every day. The melting-pot which was intended to produce a single Israeli identity never entirely worked. In addition to the Israeli Arabs, there are five distinct Jewish communities in Israel, each with its own interests and institutions.

These are the ultra-orthodox, the religious nationalists, the Sephardi Jews, the Russian immigrants and the secular Jews. The members of each community are usually easily identifiable in the street.

The ultra-orthodox sport their black suits, and the religious nationalists – a coherent community with their separate educational system and university – their skullcaps. The 600,000 Russian immigrants are not difficult to identify, nor are the Sephardi Jews, whose parents or grandparents came from the Middle East and North Africa, and whose absorption has only been partly successful.

One of the surprises of the last election was the success of their political party, Shas. Secular Israelis, highly educated, affluent, of European origin and conscious of their status as founders of the state, have tended to under-estimate the strength of these other sub-cultures. Labour, the party of the

> The division between the secular and the religious has always been at the heart of Israeli politics

secular, political and military establishment, permanently in government until 1977, was always poor at sharing power. It owed its victory in 1992 to the support of the Russian Jews, who are largely secular, but four years later ran just one Russian immigrant for the Knesset.

The division between the secular and the religious has always been at the heart of Israeli politics, but the victory of the right in the May election increased tension. Four years after it took power, the secular government of Labour and its left-wing ally, Meretz, was defeated by one in coalition with the religious parties.

The assassination last year of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, at a peace rally in Tel Aviv also gave many secular Jews a sense that the religious nationalist right does not play by democratic rules.

This makes it more difficult for a right-wing government to overcome cleavages within Israeli society by appeals to national solidarity.

Always present within Israeli society, these stresses are much greater today. For the first time, in May, the prime minister and the Knesset were elected separately. Political fragmentation has grown.

The large number of polls – such as that by the Geocartographic Institute on the likelihood of civil war – assessing the strength of Jewish solidarity and the degree of animosity between groups is itself a sign of nervousness. In Jerusalem, for instance, 40 per cent of secular Jews say they want to leave the city because of conflicts with the ultra-orthodox.

Short of armed conflict with the Palestinians, the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is probably agile enough to keep the conflict between secular and religious from boiling over. Despite the big gains of the religious communities in politics, education and their increasing role in the army, there are some signs of cultural counter-attack against the super-heated religious nationalism and reliance on armed strength alone to which Mr Netanyahu sometimes appeals.

Bomb on Paris train kills two

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

A big explosion rocked a central Paris underground station at rushhour last night, killing two people, and injuring 50. Twelve people were seriously hurt and three were said to be in a critical state.

The French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, who arrived at the scene shortly afterwards, confirmed that the explosion was caused by a bomb and immediately invoked the emergency security plan, Vigipirate, which was applied during the terrorist attacks in the summer of 1995. Justice sources said the explosive device was stored in a 15kg (33 lb) gas canister, similar to those used by Algerian Muslim fundamentalists in bombings last year.

The bomb exploded at 1805 in the second carriage of a suburban underground train as it arrived at the Port Royale station not far from Montparnasse. Eyewitnesses said that the train was still moving when the bomb went off and that "an incredible fire" broke out. Dozens of ambulances and fire engines were on the scene within minutes, the wailing of their sirens audible across central Paris.

Port Royale is on the same B line of the suburban rail network, the RER, as Saint-Michel station, where a bomb attack took place in 1995, and only two stops away.

Yesterday's bomb comes within days of Algeria's referendum in which Algerians apparently voted by a large majority for the country's new constitution which outlaws fundamentalist religious groups.

news

significant shorts

Channel Tunnel to reopen

Eurotunnel was last night given permission to resume passenger services, 15 days after fire severely damaged a 600-metre stretch of the Channel Tunnel.

The go-ahead by the Anglo-French Intergovernmental Commission, after advice from the tunnel safety authority, means Eurostar trains from Waterloo and car and coach shuttle services could start almost immediately. The welcome news for the debt-ridden company came two days after it staged a security drill to restore confidence in emergency procedures.

However, the Conservative MP Roger Gale said he still had "considerable lingering anxieties" at the re-opening.

The safety authority said after meeting in London that it was satisfied "that the necessary safety equipment is available and that revised operating and emergency procedures are in place". *Michael Streeter*

The Pope greets Carey

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, arrived in Rome for three days of talks at the Vatican. The talks will be "very tough and interesting" according to a member of the Archbishop's party.

Pope John Paul II, greeting Dr Carey in his library, said: "Even in our sad separation, Anglicans and Catholics have not ceased to be brothers and sisters in the one Lord." Dr Carey told the Pope: "We cannot undo overnight doctrinal differences and the bitternesses that have resulted from the legacy of history. But we are able to confront them as fellow Christians." *Andrew Brown*

Odd-job man is cleared

Mark Weston, 21, an odd-job man, was cleared at Oxford Crown Court of murdering his near neighbour Vikki Thompson, who was bludgeoned to death while walking her dog near Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire.

Treasury burns

The Treasury was evacuated after fire broke out in the basement. William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary, was among 1,500 people forced to wait outside while the blaze, caused by electrical equipment, was extinguished.

Pay ruling bonanza for women

Any female worker who was paid less than a man who succeeds her can claim compensation under equal-pay laws, the Employment Appeal Tribunal has decided.

Joanne Connaughton, director of music at St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield, claimed equal pay with a man who succeeded her. Ms Connaughton's basic salary was £11,138, with a travel allowance of £1,145, while her successor was appointed on £20,000. The diocese of Hallam agreed to pay her £10,000 compensation and promised to take account of guidance from the Equal Opportunities Commission in future. *Barrie Clement*

Rothschild leaves £18m

Amschel Rothschild, the financier and heir to one of the world's most powerful banking dynasties, left more than £18m. Mr Rothschild, 41, who had three children, was found hanged in a Paris hotel bathroom in July. He left most of his estate to relatives.

Hospitals will axe hundreds

Hundreds of nurses and other health workers in south-west London are expecting redundancy notices over the Christmas holidays in anticipation of spending cuts of up to £22m, according to the public service union Unison. The two health authorities involved cover Merton, Sutton, Wandsworth, Kingston and Richmond. *Barrie Clement*

Woman wins top police post

A woman has been appointed chief constable of Wiltshire police. Elizabeth Neville, deputy chief constable in Northamptonshire, will be Britain's second woman chief constable.

Homes blow for the poor

Budget cuts mean the Government will fail to meet its target on social housing for the needy, it was claimed. The National Housing Federation said that the number of new homes built annually would fall from 60,000 to a maximum of 45,000 by 2,000, thanks in part to a £356m Budget cut in funding for housing associations. *Michael Streeter*

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BACK ISSUES

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How come they got it so wrong over Europe?

Anthony Bevins on what the papers didn't say

The Prime Minister yesterday firmly nailed reports that he was prepared to jettison the agreed Cabinet line on the European single currency.

Repeated reports in several newspapers suggested that he was about to rule Britain out of the euro for the five-year lifetime of another parliament, but then John Major said yesterday morning that such stories deserved the Booker Prize for fiction. In contrast, *The Independent* reported yesterday that Mr Major would not be able to change the policy.

That was underscored in two Commons answers to Tony Blair. The Prime Minister definitively restated government policy – and dashed the raised hopes of Tory Euro-sceptics.

The Labour leader asked whether government policy remained that, "at the next election you will not rule out the option of joining a single currency in the next parliament, remains unequivocally the position of the Government?"

To the general surprise of the House, Mr Major said: "That remains unequivocally the position of the Government."

Having given credit for the clarity of that reply, Mr Blair then asked Mr Major to endorse a statement made by Michael Heseltine, in a lunchtime radio interview, that there would be no change in that position up to, and through, the next election campaign. Mr Major said: "That is our position."

That left frontbenchers and backbench MPs throughout the House to chew over the many conspiracy theories that may or may not lie behind Monday's initial *Daily Telegraph* report so forthrightly repudiated by Mr Major - until the next time a Euro-sceptic newspaper repeats the same story.

Whether the report was planted by Number 10, Conservative Central Office, a rogue Cabinet Minister - or, as one Tory source said only half in jest last night, Labour campaign manager Peter Mandelson, the result was to firm up the Government stance on sterling. Some Tory Euro-sceptics had hoped to unstitch the policy early next year, with a claim that the terms for the creation of the euro were being fudged.

That idea was killed by Mr Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke yesterday, with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer both saying that the terms would not be known until the Amsterdam summit in June - after the next election.

In an unusual Commons statement on Monday's meeting of finance ministers, in Brussels, Mr Clarke used the same formula that ministers have applied to Northern Ireland peace talks: "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed."

That meant that even when the whole euro package had been settled, individual countries would have an overriding right the "revisit" the deal as a whole.

Mr Heseltine and Mr Clarke said the earliest that could happen would be June. Interviewed on BBC radio's *World at One*, Mr Heseltine also said that it would defy the "national self-interest" to close off the option of joining the euro.

The agreement between the two most senior members of Mr Major's government, and the rare clarity of Mr Major's Commons answers, fuelled Tory Euro-sceptic - and Labour - suspicion that Mr Major had been bullied into submission, on pain of joint resignation. It also left some Labour leadership sources claiming that Mr Blair was now more sceptical about the Euro than the Tories.

Wrong: Yesterday's *Financial Times*

Wrong: Monday's *Daily Telegraph*

Wrong: Yesterday's *Daily Mail*

Right: Yesterday's *Independent*

FO bars funeral children

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Two grieving daughters cannot come to Britain from Ghana for their mother's funeral on Friday because their family were not close enough, a foreign-office minister has ruled.

Labour's social-services spokeswoman Harriet Harman, who was Gladys Otutey's MP, made a last-minute appeal last night for a change of heart. She said it was "totally unacceptable" for decisions to be made on the basis of how fond was the relationship between mother and daughters. The Walworth Methodist Church, where Mrs Otutey sang in the choir, has also urged the minister to change his mind.

Ms Otutey's family say she telephoned her daughters and wrote to them regularly after she came here in 1990, but officials who interviewed them in Ghana concluded that their contact had been "limited".

In a letter to Ms Harman, Dr Liam Fox, the under-secretary of state at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said that Doreen, 19, and Grace, 23, failed to convince officials in Accra that they only wanted to come to Britain for the funeral.

"The young ladies' limited contact with, and knowledge of, their mother was striking and relevant," he said. "I am in no doubt whatsoever about the importance in a close family of children being able to attend a parent's funeral. However, I must balance this against my responsibility to ensure that the immigration rules are fully upheld."

A spokeswoman for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said there had been other reasons for the refusal. Ms Otutey, who worked as a cleaner at Waterloo Station, had been refused leave to remain in Britain in July this year just before she became ill with a brain tumour.

Ms Otutey's boyfriend, Andrew Beasley, said he would ensure the girls went home. "[They] should be here. It's wrong," he said.

Wet suit: A fireman cleans himself of asbestos after a minor fire at the Treasury in Parliament Street, Whitehall. Chief Secretary William Waldegrave was among 1,500 people led to safety. Photograph: John Voos

Children to sue ministers over food poisoning

Susan Emmett

Seven children are suing the Government and other organisations after they were infected by the food poisoning bug which has now claimed the lives of six pensioners in Scotland.

Their families say the Government failed to warn the public and advise health authorities and NHS trusts about the dangers of E-coli 0157, the bacterium responsible for the food poisoning.

The children, all under the age of eight, contracted the bug in unrelated cases in different parts of England. They were yesterday granted legal aid to sue the Department of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food.

Three of them, two from the same family in Liverpool, and one from Gateshead, will also be suing the fast food chain McDonald's and their suppliers McKey Foods Ltd. The other four, from two different families in Stoke-on-Trent, are taking action against the butchers A J Green and Sons.

Gary Thomas, father of four-year-old Rachel and seven-year-old Katie, claimed his daughters picked up the bacteria after eating a McDonald's meal in Liverpool last August.

"We knew nothing about E-coli, this burger bug."

Lucy Kennedy, of Howe & Co, which is representing the families, said a report by the Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food published in 1995 warned against E-coli 0157. The report recommended the labelling of beef products with information about the bacterium and said that hygiene methods in abattoirs needed to be reviewed.

In the Stoke cases, four children from two families fell ill after eating rare burgers at a family barbecue. Their parents say they were unaware of the dangers.

The family of two of the other children say they developed symptoms following a meal at a McDonald's restuarant in Liverpool.

All seven children have recovered but parents are concerned that the illness may have caused long-term damage.

The Department of Health said health professionals received advice form the royal colleges and from the Public Health Laboratory Service.

The spokesman said Government recommendations were fed through the royal colleges to the medical profession.

McDonald's said last night: "We take any claims of this nature very seriously and will investigate fully as soon as details have been advised to us by the lawyers involved."

■ Doctors are trying to trace 20 students at the University of Wales in Cardiff who have not been given antibiotic treatment against the outbreak of meningitis that has killed two students.

No more cases of meningitis were reported in Cardiff yesterday. The results of tests on 24 students under observation are expected shortly. Three others are being treated for the disease, one was described as "critical but improving". The other two were responding well.

Dublin pay-off scandal deepens block on naming

Alan Murdoch
Dublin

The scandal over pay-offs to Dublin politicians deepened last night as both the Prime Minister and Speaker of the Dail urged TDs (MPs) not to name the former Fianna Fail cabinet minister who received IR£1.1m secretly from Irish supermarket chief Ben Dunne through different London bank accounts.

Sean Treacy, the Speaker, warned against naming individuals outside the chamber in a way that might prejudice official investigations. The Prime Minister, John Bruton, urged that members refer such allegations to relevant authorities to be dealt with by due process.

The cheques and 100 others to politicians, business figures, and a broadcaster are included in a report prepared for Dunnes Stores, Ireland's second largest supermarket chain, by accountants Price Waterhouse. The affair has already led to the weekend resignation of Irish transport minister Michael Lowry over 1992 payments of IR£208,000 from Mr Dunne. In last night's Dail debate on appointing former Fine Gael party leader Alan Dukes as Mr Lowry's successor, opposition parties demanded to know what if any favours Mr Dunne had received from Mr Lowry. Progressive Democrat leader Mary Harney said: "We should be told if Ben Dunne benefited financially from any decision made by Mr Lowry or by his Department."

She then asked if the Taoiseach was made aware that Mr Lowry "held a loan from Dunnes Stores after his appointment as minister." She urged Mr Bruton to publish what Mr Lowry said about his interests when he became a minister in 1994.

Earlier, Bertie Ahern, leader of Fianna Fail, said he was "totally satisfied" with assurances from each of his current front bench that none had been the recipient of the £1.1m London payments. Today he will ask for the same assurances from all members of his parliamentary party and MEPs.

Virtual talks on Northern Ireland

David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

Northern Ireland politics have just collided with virtual reality in the world of on-line communications, generating a flurry of angry messages whizzing through the ether.

In an electronic echo of what has been happening in political talks in Belfast, members of an on-line discussion forum will this weekend discuss ways of keeping a republican sympathiser out of their proceedings. The group's moderator, journalist and broadcaster Vincent Hanna, is threatening to resign if things are not sorted out. Up to 100 people may take part in Sunday night's electronic conference, which has been called on the issue of support for violence.

They will be able to vote on a motion advocating the exclusion of anyone who advocates or supports the use of violence. Mr Hanna is suggesting that participants should adopt the Mitchell principles – six affirmations of non-violence formulated by talks chairman Senator George Mitchell – as the basis for discussions.

'Merry Christmas': poverty behind the presents, grim warnings, advice on bad behaviour and screen wars

No fun for Disney's £1-a-day workers

Action Man: Uniform low pay

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

The makers of Barbie and Sindy dolls, Action Man and Disney toys have failed to alleviate the "poverty pay and appalling working conditions" suffered by many Asian workers, according to a Third World pressure group.

Despite a code of practice agreed by British suppliers and retailers, staff employed by some foreign factories are breathing in toxic fumes and working up to 24 hours at a stretch to meet the Christmas rush. Others have their pay docked for minor indiscretions and some factories still employ child labour, the World Development Movement (WDM) alleges.

In a Chinese factory producing Disney toys, one 17-year-old girl earns just over £1 for an average 11-hour a day, seven days a week, the movement says.

Every day Hasbro UK, makers of Sindy and Action Man, spends more on advertising than on the wages paid to 7,000 Thai toy workers.

Staff making Barbie and Disney characters in Thailand continuously lose the right to maternity, holiday or sick pay because the factory dismisses them after 119 days – a day before their entitlement to benefits is triggered. They are immediately re-employed without their rights.

A Chinese toy worker would have to work three months to earn the £80 we spend on average on toys for one child at Christmas, says the WDM.

Jessica Woodruffe, the WDM's head of campaigns, said British toy companies require minimum standards of product quality to ensure toys were safe for children. "They could also require minimum standards to ensure factories are safe for workers."

The campaign by the WDM – which is funded by its membership, churches and aid agencies – began more than three years ago after 188 workers were killed and 469 injured in a fire at the Kader toy works in Thailand.

Some companies yesterday were commended by the organisation. Sainsbury, the Gap and B&Q were all developing monitoring systems to give safety codes "teeth", Ms Woodruffe said.

David Hawtin, director general of the British Toy and Hobby Association, said the industry was surprised by the organisation's "onslaught". The association had set up a three-person complaints committee in Europe, following assertions by the movement.

Mr Hawtin said that manuals had been issued to factories in southern China where most of the toy production took place. Factories were encouraged to comply with local laws on working hours, pay and a minimum age for employees. Health and safety seminars had been held.

He said that Hong Kong unions were behind yesterday's WDM report. Employees' leaders in the colony had lost their "power base" because toy manufacture had moved to China to take advantage of lower labour costs. Many of the workers were desperately poor and from north and west China, Mr Hawtin said. "They earn more in one month from making toys than they could earn in a year on the farm.

"They work like stinko during the peak season from March to October and they want to work hard. There are always plenty of people wishing to be re-employed."

Lee Hao, a factory manager in Shenzhen city, gave another version to the WDM: "Those peasants are brutes. You have to whip them like donkeys to make them understand."

Chuck Champlin of Disney in California said the movement had given them few specifics. However, he said the company was adamant that manufacturers obey the law in their countries. "We will investigate any allegations of wrong-doing if provided with the details."

Barbie: No maternity rights

Water down the festive spirit

Barrie Clement

Employers should tone down Christmas parties or learn to cope with the resulting fights, sexual harassment, vandalism and drug abuse when festivities get out of hand, according to experts in employment law.

It is no good plying the workers with free drink and then disciplining them for outlandish behaviour afterwards, according to Eversheds, the solicitors.

One couple, who virtually had sexual intercourse in front of their colleagues, won an unfair dismissal case because management had tolerated similar exhibitions in the past, said Trish Embley, an employment law specialist at Eversheds.

The classic case involved Dixons, the electrical chain, which dismissed two of its area managers in London for a "lewd act", involving simulated sex. An Employment Appeals Tribunal found that the men had been unlawfully sacked because there had been a history of "turns in bad taste" at company functions. The tribunal decided that new rules of conduct had not been properly communicated to Dixons staff prior to the party.

Ms Embley warned employers that tribunals "take a dim view" of companies encouraging staff to let their hair down and then trying to discipline them afterwards.

Employers should be particularly wary of providing free drink. Tribunals would always take such a facility into account as a mitigating circumstance when assessing whether the employee's behaviour justified dismissal.

She said that her caseload in the early months of the year tended to be dominated with the aftermath of Christmas festivities which got out of hand.

Her advice to companies was to inform staff about the kind of behaviour that was expected of them and ensure that management realised they had a duty to keep matters under control at the time.

Ms Embley who last night enjoyed her own firm's Christmas party, said: "It is perfectly all right for people to get a bit silly and a bit tiddly, but matters should not be allowed to go to far."

Party season: 'It is perfectly all right for people to get a bit silly and a bit tiddly, but matters should not be allowed to go to far' Photograph: Brian Harris

The BBC unveils a TV dinosaur

Marianne Macdonald
Media Correspondent

An in-depth study of England's *Euro 96* campaign, revealing that the defender Gareth Southgate did not practice penalty kicks before the crucial game against Germany, leads the BBC's Christmas schedule.

When Football Came Home, to be shown on 23 December, will be followed by *Jurassic Park* from the Hollywood director Steven Spielberg as the Christmas Day blockbuster film to be screened at 7pm – competing with *The Remains of the Day* on ITV, starring Sir Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson.

Jurassic Park is a part of an estimated £5m deal which includes a screening of *Schindler's List* next year, it emerged yesterday. The BBC's Christmas lineup will also feature the comedian David Jason in a three-part mini series of *Only Fools And Horses* and Dawn French in *The Vicar of Dibley*. The festive fortnight contains almost 200 hours of BBC-originated material, with 37 drama and entertainment specials (including a new adaptation of George Eliot's dark classic *The Mill On The Floss*) and 12 network television film premières.

Scheduled are *The Firm*, adapted from John Grisham's novel and starring Tom Cruise as a lawyer desperate to escape his new employers; the whale movie *Free Willy*; *Cliffhanger*, starring Sylvester Stallone; and *Shadowlands*, with Sir Anthony Hopkins playing the writer CS Lewis. Richard Gere and Jodie Foster star in *Sommersby*, Hollywood's American civil war version of the Martin Guerre story, and Woody Allen's *Manhattan Murder Mystery* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* starring Al Pacino and Jack Lemmon will be on BBC2.

On Christmas Day there will be an *EastEnders* special, the annual round-up of *Top of the Pops*, an *Animal Hospital* special presented by Rolf Harris and, of course, the Queen's *Christmas Message* at 3pm.

But Christmas is a key battle area for broadcasters. Michael Jackson, the controller of BBC1, warned: "We will tinker with the schedule right up until the last minute. We want to make sure we have the best programme combination."

Adverts target young drivers' vanity

Michael Streeter

The Government yesterday targeted the guilt and vanity of young people in its new Christmas campaign against drink-driving.

The message, more subtle than in recent years, features a television advertisement in which an actress portrays a young woman badly scarred in an accident the year before by her drink-driving boyfriend. The woman, played by Isobel Raine, is looking into a mirror and taking off her make-up after a night out with her boyfriend. "Anyway, we're still together, although sometimes I think he's only with me because he feels guilty," she says. "Then again, I wonder if I'm only with him because I'm scared I won't get anyone else."

Under fire from critics who claim that the number of drink-related accidents have stopped falling, Road Safety Minister John Bowis said yesterday they were following research in tackling the main group of offenders – young men aged 17 to 24.

Mr Bowis said that young males seemed less concerned whether they killed themselves in an accident. "The research indicates that what does affect them is the thought that they may maim or scar someone else – for example a girlfriend ... The woman featured in our campaign has the everlasting reminder of the dangers of drinking and driving."

Ms Raine who wore make-up depicting a heavily-scarred forehead and cheek, said that in a "vain" society, the prospect of facial disfigurement played heavily on young people's lives. "It brings home the point that scars are not just for Christmas – they are for life."

The launch of the £1.2m poster and television campaign – at the Metropolitan Police Training Centre in Hendon, north-west London – included a mock road accident handled by fire and ambulancemen, watched by cast members of BBC Television's *Casualty* programme.

A parallel radio campaign will use the carol "Silent Night" as reports of drink-drive accidents are relayed.

The concern for the Government is that despite the success of last year's award-winning campaign – featuring a brain-damaged youth who had been egged on by his mates to have "one more" – the number of drink-related road deaths appears to have levelled out. Last year, the number of deaths was 580, dramatically down from the 1985 number of 1,040, but 40 more than in 1994.

Proclaiming the success of campaigns over 20 years, Mr Bowis said: "The vast majority of drivers over the years have been persuaded by the Government's ... messages. We still, however, need to persuade the minority who cause such unnecessary suffering."

Edmund King, RAC head of campaigns said: "After 10 years of decline the drink-drive accident figures have started to plateau. It is essential that we continue with these hard-hitting campaigns and that the police target the hard core of persistent offenders."

Labour's transport spokeswoman Glenda Jackson welcomed the new campaign but re-affirmed the party's view that it would seek to lower the alcohol limit for drivers from 80 mgs to 50mgs per 100ml of blood, in line with many other European countries.

Mr Bowis said the level was always under review but did not want to have that debate deflecting from the Christmas campaign.

High-profile contenders eye Scott seat

FRAN ABRAMS
Political Correspondent

The hunt for a replacement for deposed Conservative MP Sir Nicholas Scott will begin today, sources in the former minister's Kensington and Chelsea constituency said last night.

Notices will go out to begin the selection process for a new MP to represent the area after the general election, when Sir Nicholas will stand down. There are likely to be a number of high-profile contenders for the seat, which is one of the safest in the country.

Party members refused to back Sir Nicholas's continued candidature on Monday night. The move to deselect him came after he was found lying face-down on the pavement after a drinks reception. Although he pleaded that a moderate amount of wine had reacted with medication he was taking, many people felt the incident was the last straw. It followed a drink-driving conviction earlier this year.

Sir Nicholas told a packed meeting at Kensington Town Hall that he had given up drink completely, but he was defeated by 509 votes to 439.

Yesterday Andrew Dalton, constituency chairman, said a new candidate for the seat would be selected before the end of January. "We are wasting no time at all," he said.

Mr Dalton said the 130-strong executive council of the association would meet next week to set up a timetable for the selection process, and the post would then be advertised to people on the Conservative Party's approved list of candidates. The final stage would be a meeting at which a minimum of four contenders would address party members, and at which a ballot would be held.

Mr Dalton, who denied rumours that he was planning to stand for the seat himself, said the move to unseat Sir Nicholas was unconnected with his reputation as a "wet". He also described as "nonsense" the suggestion that the seat was being kept warm for the return of Chris Patten, currently governor of Hong Kong.

"I don't think that Nick was deselected because of anything political. There was a feeling that he was becoming accident-prone, and he had indicated that he was only going to stand for one more parliament," he said.

Among those whose names were being mentioned as possible successors last night was the Northern Ireland minister, Sir John Wheeler, whose Westminster North constituency has been affected by boundary changes. Sir John's office said last night that he was not commenting on the rumours.

Other possible runners could include Hartley Booth, the MP who succeeded Margaret Thatcher in Finchley and who has also been hit by boundary changes, Terry Dicks, MP for Hayes and Harlington, who has a majority of just 53, and Alan Clark.

Last night Mr Dicks confirmed that he was thinking of standing, although few commentators believe he will be selected.

"Of course I am interested and yes I will apply. Then we will allow the selection committee to make their choice," he said.

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

SCORING THE EXCHANGES

John Major 9/10 Major was disarmingly frank and to-the-point. "It is right to give the Prime Minister credit for such a clear reply," as Blair himself put it. Although Major made his conventional attempt to be rude to other questioners, his candour was refreshing.

Tony Blair 3/10 If he wanted Major to offer a hostage to Eurosceptic fortune, then Blair got what he wanted. But if, as seems more likely, he wanted Major to equivocate, then his plans were thoroughly scuppered.

THEMES OF THE DAY

- Labour's plans for GP fundholding (Peter Butler, C, NE Milton Keynes)
- Direct taxation as a proportion of average incomes (Clive Betts, Lab, Sheffield, Attercliffe)
- Council tax levels (John Marshall, C, Hendon S)
- Taxation on the poor (Andrew McKinlay, Lab, Thurrock)

BLAIR'S ATTACK

Not so much an attack - more a couple of issues Blair wanted clearing up. He asked Major to confirm that the refusal to rule out joining the single currency in the next Parliament remained unequivocally the position of the government. "That remains unequivocally the position of the government," replied Major. Blair sat still for a couple of moments before rising to ask whether Major agreed with Michael Heseltine's pledge given on the radio several hours beforehand, that the position would not change. The reply: "My Rt Hon Friend said that, that is our position". Blair had no third question.

GOOD DAY... ...BAD DAY

Clive Betts - Said Commons library figures showed that direct taxes paid by an average family have risen not just in real terms, but also in proportion to average earnings. Major replied that the figures were distorted by people moving up the tax bands, and that "they are £1,100 better off next year than before the last election".

Cynog Dafis (PC, Ceredigion and Pembroke) who was shown the yellow card for applauding a public gallery protest against arms sales to Indonesia.

THE QUIP OF THE DAY

Edward O'Hara (Lab, Knowsley S) who asked if Major would confirm "that in order to qualify for all the 25 Tory tax cuts! a taxpayer must have a small company, drive a vintage car, and be dead?"

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

What was Blair up to? or David Sumberg (C, Bury S) asked, as it was the Bury and Bolton Chamber of Commerce's Christmas lunch on Friday, would Major send them congratulations for their economic success over the past year, "and best wishes for a new year of greater prosperity under a new Conservative government". Major, to his credit, neglected to answer.

THE CREEP OF THE DAY

Dr Robert Spink (C, Castle Point) "On the day in which the Palace is graced with the presence of the forces' sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn, would my Rt Hon Friend send a message of goodwill to everyone in the armed forces who will be serving over Christmas?"

Compiled by Ben Summers

Community care: MP Ken Livingstone talks to Rachel Goldberg, who is supported by Norwood Ravenswood, the new £17m Jewish learning-disability charity Photograph: David Rose

Party's health spokesman says he wants 'joint consent' as he outlines proposals for the NHS

Labour set to scrap fundholding

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

GP fundholding could be scrapped within "two to three years" of Labour taking office, Chris Smith, the shadow health secretary, said yesterday in the clearest statement so far of Labour's plans for the NHS.

Fundholding GPs, the Prime Minister and Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, attacked the plans, which mark a shift from outright abolition of fundholding threatened by Labour in the past.

Mr Smith told the *Independent* in an exclusive interview that he wanted to proceed "by consent" in replacing GP fundholding with "joint commissioning", in which groups of family doctors would be expected to act together in planning services for their area. He made a distinction between single-handed GP fundholders, who would be told to join commissioning GPs, and fundholding groups who may be allowed to continue. "That is one of the reasons why it is important to try to take people with us. It is going to be evolution rather than revolution."

Mr Smith said there were circumstances in which fundholding could be allowed to continue, if it was with the agreement of the other GPs in the area. "Ultimately, if we had a number of GP contractors saying we are not going go in with these locality groupings, we might have to say, 'Sorry, you have to'. And there is provision if you have everyone else in a partnership who agrees and it is within the guidelines of the locality group for you to continue."

Mr Smith will seek to introduce an NHS Bill within the first year of a Labour government to change the present framework of 100 health authorities, possibly reducing their numbers, and turning them into more strategic bodies with responsibility for promoting public health and monitoring performance of GP commissioning groups. But he disclosed that he envisages using the Government's own NHS Primary Care, which received a second reading in the Lords last night, to introduce pilot schemes for joint commissioning before the gradual change took place.

In a speech setting out his plans, Mr Smith told a London conference: "Our plans for GP commissioning would eliminate the two-tier system which GP fundholding has created and which has led to many hospitals imposing longer waits for treatment for the patients of non-fundholders. Local commissioning groups should also be properly accountable to local voices so that the views of patients and residents were taken into account."

Mr Smith yesterday committed Labour to matching the Tory's election pledge to spend an extra £1.6bn on the NHS next year, if Labour win the general election. He refused to meet the Tory pledge to spend more in real terms every year over the lifetime of the next Parliament under the tight spending constraints enforced by Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor.

Mr Dorrell claimed that if Labour won the election, more than 50 per cent of family doctors who had chosen to manage their own budgets would have these budgets stripped from them. "They will be shackled - many against their will - into a form of chain-gang committee-based commissioning."

Mr Dorrell said there was a raft of unanswered questions following Mr Smith's speech.

He said it was unclear whether commissioning groups would be allowed to retain any budget savings and what incentive there would be for better purchasing.

Clive Parr, of the National Association of Fundholding Practices, warned there would be resistance from GP fundholders.

"A recent poll of fundholders showed quite clearly that the vast majority of fundholders oppose the concept of commissioning groups," he said.

Dr Judy Gilley, joint deputy chairman of the BMA general medical services committee, said: "We would wish to see the evolution to local commissioning groups is voluntary, piloted and protects the best interests of fundholding practices as well as non-fundholding practices."

Labour's plans to reform the internal market include:

- Longer-term agreements of three to five years, to replace the annual contracting round.
- An end to individual patient invoicing and extra-contractual referrals procedures.
- The disappearance of many management tasks from GP practice level, health authority level and hospitals
- Consideration of a reduction in the number of health authorities
- A reduction to one-tenth of the present number of agreements and contracts in the health service.

GPs offer hospital cash from funds

Louise Jury

Fundholding GPs in a health authority forced to halt heart operations because of a cash crisis have millions of pounds of savings, *The Independent* has learned.

GPs in Oxfordshire are expected to be able to carry a £3.1m surplus from last year into next – while Oxfordshire Health Authority predicts a £3.1m deficit for the financial year.

The authority's problems have forced the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford to stop all non-urgent cardiac surgery this month except in cases where GP fundholders are guaranteeing payment. It has asked fundholders whether they will hand over some of their spare cash to help and a donation of £200,000 has been agreed.

Dr Sian Griffiths, the authority's director of public health and health policy, and Nick Relph, the finance director, said the situation highlighted "nonsenses" in the fundholding rules which unfairly favoured fundholders.

Unlike health authorities, fundholders are allowed to carry savings through to the next financial year. They also carry less financial risk as they are not responsible for emergency provision, which has seen a major increase in recent years, or services for patients, including mentally disordered offenders.

Dr Griffiths said: "It's not the fundholders' problem that the system is so different, but the pressures do not hit fundholders in the same way."

Nick Relph said the problem was potentially even greater next year as the authority, which holds the money for the fundholders, has already spent last year's £3.1m GPs savings because it suffered a £3m deficit last year too.

Mr Relph said: "Any health authority that has had significant savings by fundholders has done the same thing. It is certainly true of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. We're all wondering how we will pay it back."

Dr Evan Harris, a doctor in Oxford and prospective Liberal Democrat party candidate, said: "This means that the service you get as a patient depends on the funding mechanism of your doctor. It's unfair and it runs contrary to clinical need."

And Chris Smith, Labour's health spokesman, said: "People are quite rightly angry that all over the country GP fundholders are making surpluses while health authorities and hospitals are going into the red. This is another reason why we are going to replace fundholding with a more equitable system of GP commissioning."

The cash crisis in Oxfordshire comes as evidence of the funding shortfall emerges across the country as predicted by doctors and health service managers last month.

Fazakerley Hospital in Liverpool has postponed all non-urgent operations after 14 patients had to spend the night in casualty because of a beds shortage last month.

The Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham has suspended routine operations for the whole of November and December – an estimated 350 operations. "They are not cancelled completely, but if we carried on we would completely run out of money," a spokesman said.

The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust banned non-urgent elective surgery in August and will be performing no more until the start of the next financial year. A 10 per cent increase in emergencies would have meant an additional £600,000 bill for the North and East Devon Health Authority, its major purchaser. "They did not have the money, so they requested we stopped all but em-ergency work," a spokeswoman said.

In the Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust, some cardiac surgery has been put off because there was no money to pay for it. And the United Bristol Healthcare Trust has slowed down the rate of its routine surgery, extending waiting lists to a maximum 18 months, to help limit its projected £500,000 deficit.

Hospital's wish list draws flack

James Cusick

The wedding list, long the domain of fashionable couples seeking useful gifts as opposed to 20 toasters, has been adopted by an NHS Trust hospital. The League of Friends of Barnet Hospital in north London has issued a medical "shopping list" for the public in its "Make a Million" campaign.

Where the wedding list might concentrate on decent china or cutlery, the Barnet shopping list is asking the public to raise cash and buy everything from basic stethoscopes to expensive ultra-sound scanning machines identified on the medical gift list.

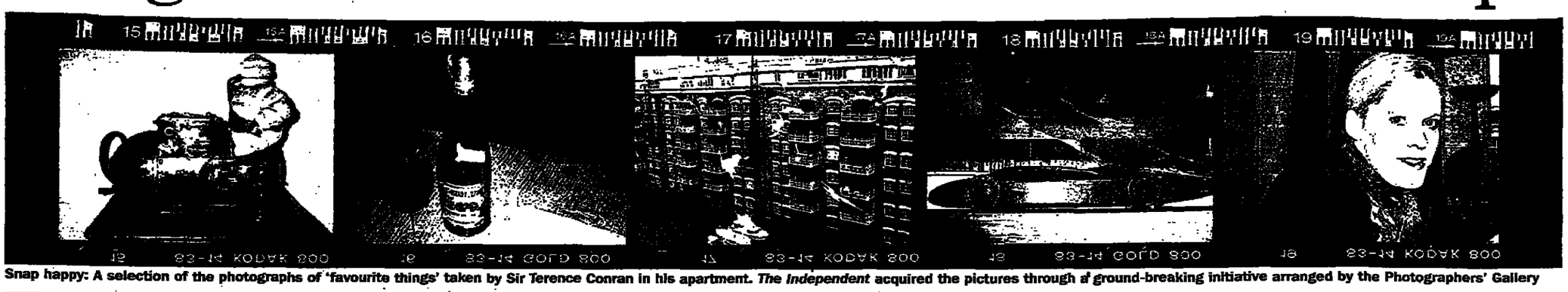
Geoff Martin, campaign director of the London Health Emergency lobbying group, criticised the shopping list appeal yesterday, stating : "At a time when the Government are telling us that they are pumping funds into the NHS we've got a prestigious new hospital begging the public to stump up cash for basic medical equipment." Mr Martin also claims that the "shopping list" equipment will eventually become the property of the private consortium who ultimately are accountable to shareholders.

Sue Maclellan, operations director of the Wellhouse Trust, denies the public are being conned. "The equipment that is donated to the trust - and there is clear evidence that people have a need to give - will remain the property of the trust." She said that the trust would eventually face a lease bill for the new hospital and for equipment. "Essentially the more equipment we own, the less will be our bill from the consortium."

However, she said if the consortium did take over the ownership of all of Barnet Hospital, it would become responsible for the maintenance of all equipment and its replacement.

The LHE appears less than impressed. Mr Martin added: "This whole sordid exercise underlines the underfunding of the of the NHS. How long before hospitals start asking the general public to sponsor the cost of bed pans?"

Caught on camera: Terence Conran's £100 snaps



Snap happy: A selection of the photographs of 'favourite things' taken by Sir Terence Conran in his apartment. *The Independent* acquired the pictures through a ground-breaking initiative arranged by the Photographers' Gallery

New role: Sir Terence Conran, photographer

Elizabeth Wine

Ever wondered if the snaps of the famous come out any better than yours? For £50-100 you can find out. The Photographers' Gallery in London gave several designers, photographers and celebrities throwaway cameras with just one instruction: shoot at will.

The cameras are being returned, autographed, and are on sale to the public until 10 January. The gamble the buyer takes is to process—and lose the camera and autograph—or keep the bit of plastic and never know what the photographer saw through the lens.

The Independent gambled £100 on design guru and restaurateur Sir Terence Conran's offering and found an eclectic collection of pictures taken in his apartment in ten minutes over a lunch hour.

Sir Terence was startled to hear that a newspaper had bought the camera, and said he was relieved he hadn't followed his original idea for an erotic portfolio. "I had thought it might be nice to do a Marquis de Sade kind of thing, give somebody a shock if they developed the film, but I resisted. I thought there's enough of that stuff around already."

Sir Terence took 27 pictures of his "favourite things" which ranged from an ordinary gas ring to a woman called Victoria Davis with whom he has been romantically linked in the gossip columns.

The Michelin man graces two of the snaps. "Monsieur Bibendum is my hero," Sir Terence said, recalling the opening of his first Habitat shop in 1964 across the street from the old Michelin building, then in a bad state of disrepair. He often gazed across at the old building "with great love and envy" and dreamt of it in a glorious state. In the mid-Eighties, he realised his dream, bought the building and put his Bibendum restaurant and Conran store in it.

Other pictures capture ordinary items, like his lunch, a piece of pink beef and a bottle of red wine ("I'm all for supporting British beef,") and a smoking cigar in an ashtray. Other favourite things include an African shield, a steel model of a lobster bought in France and an enormous plane eight feet across hanging in a skylight.

Objets d'art feature in many shots, including one frame filled entirely with a blue wavy painting bought from a Royal College of Art student show. He also snapped several white vases, a Japanese red lacquer box and two heads by his friend, the sculptor Edwardo Paolozzi.

Other guest shooters for the "One Careful Owner" sale include talkshow host Jonathan Ross, Body Shop founder Anita Roddick, designer Paul Smith, Jools Holland, photographers Suky Best, Dorothy Bohm, Michael Kruger, Calum Colvin and the photojournalist Dario Mitidieri.

Ironically, the cameras used by designers and entertainers cameras sell for £100 while those wielded by the professionals fetch only £50.

Mystery packages: Cameras for sale at the gallery Photographs (above and left): John Voos

Staring eyes clue to road-rage murder

Charlie Bain

The fiancée of road-rage victim Lee Harvey yesterday made an emotional appeal for the capture of the man who stabbed her boyfriend to death after a car chase down a deserted country lane.

Speaking to journalists for the first time since the attack, Tracey Andrews, 27, described the killer as having "starey eyes" and said that he could quite possibly have been on drugs.

"He didn't seem normal," she said. "I can't say he seemed drunk but it seemed to me he wasn't normal as if he had taken something."

Ms Andrews, who was punched by the killer and suffered two black eyes in the assault, described Mr Harvey as "a lovely, kind, generous man" and said the couple had planned to marry next June. "This is the most stupid, vile thing that could come out of just a car chase," she added.

Mr Harvey, of Alvechurch, Worcestershire, was attacked by a passenger in a "tarty", F-registration, dark-coloured Ford Sierra late on Sunday night after the driver had followed his Ford Escort for several miles flashing its lights.

When he got out to confront the driver, the passenger got out and stabbed him 15 times in the throat, body and face, leaving him to die on the roadside.

Tracey Andrews: 'Life ruined by stupid and vile attack'

Ms Andrews said the couple had been out for a drink earlier that evening at a pub in Bromsgrove before returning via a country lane to their home in Alvechurch:

"We were just followed and chased along the lanes. It was the case of both Lee and the other person playing cat-and-mouse with each other for a while and then they overtook us. Lee decided to pull in and got out of the car.

"There was some sort of argument going on, just calling each other names and a lot of swearing going on. I don't know what was said but I know it was to do with the driving."

She said a passenger from the car walked up and hit Mr Harvey which prompted her to challenge the man.

"We had a confrontation and he hit me," she said. "When I got up he was walking back to the car and Lee was lying on the floor.

"The driver walked off. It was nothing to do with the driver, and I want to say will the driver of the car come forward because you are not to blame for this and I know that because you walked away.

"But you obviously knew him [the killer]. He has ruined my life and he has ruined the life of Lee's parents. It was not your fault. Please come forward."

She described how she put her coat over her fiancée and comforted him as he lay bleeding on the ground: "I was just in a state of shock myself. I knew it was bad because I saw a lot of blood."

Detective Superintendent Ian Johnston, leading the hunt for the killer said the response to appeals for witnesses had so far been slow although several names had already been put forward for the driver and the attacker.

The killer is described as a white male 5ft 9 inches to 6ft tall, very overweight and wearing a dark thigh-length donkey jacket. He spoke with a Birmingham accent and would have been heavily bloodstained following the attack.

Language shame of top companies

Seventeen companies and organisations were yesterday publicly named on the *Plain English* Campaign's first "list of shame".

Among the organisations were the National Police Training Centre, Commercial Union, Bradford & Bingley Building Society and the Co-operative Bank.

The campaign published its first "list of shame" to embarrass firms into producing leaflets, reports and letters in plain language.

It appealed to people to send in more examples, with the battle cry: "You name 'em, we'll shame 'em."

Among the more choice examples of jargon were:

☐ "Quality asurance (sic) may be defined as all the planned and systematic activities implemented within the quality system and demonstrated as needed, to provide adequate confidence that an entity will fulfil requirements for quality."

☐ "If, at a plan review before age 55 (the age limit applies to the older partner for joint life plans), it is necessary to reduce the sum insured, then, within three months of the reduction, a new plan may be effected, without evidence of health, for a sum insured not exceeding the amount of the reduction." – Sun Life of Canada

The list of shame is set to be published every month or so, depending on the number of entries sent in to the Plain English Campaign. Shamed firms will be entered for the group's annual Golden Bulls awards.

news

Official papers reveal reveal picture of selfish and indiscreet man who embarrassed Britain

The Duke of Windsor inspecting a German military training school at Groessinsee

Duke who just could not be beastly to the Nazis

The duke and duchess meeting Adolf Hitler in 1937 Photographs: Hulton Getty

John Crossland

The 1945 Labour government desperately tried to conceal evidence of the Duke of Windsor's ambivalent attitude towards Germany during the early part of the Second World War, according to official papers released yesterday.

A top-secret file from the private papers of Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary, which had been ordered to remain closed for a century, was opened at the Public Record Office in Kew.

German diplomatic papers found at Schloss Marburg by the American occupiers in May 1945 had showed up the duke's ambivalent attitudes to a continuation of the war – sympathies which had encouraged the SS to launch "Operation Willi", with a view to luring him on to Spanish territory, where he would have been kidnapped. Other private papers relating to the duke's peace-feelers are believed to have been secreted from the home of the Royal Family's German cousins at Schloss Coburg by the spy Anthony Blunt. (They may surface after the century set for release of the abdication papers.)

A dramatic personal testament to the duke's indiscretions was revealed yesterday in a minute sent to the Foreign Office via the Lisbon embassy in April 1943. A count Nava de Tajo, described as "an agreeable young Spaniard" who was formerly an employee of the League of Nations, had told an embassy official that the duke had "expected the British Cabinet to resign in the near future and expected to see the creation of a Labour government which would enter into negotiations with Germany. He expected also that King George VI would abdicate, following a virtual revolution brought about by the fact that the ruling classes had utterly disgraced themselves and that he the Duke of Windsor would be summoned to return to England to occupy the throne."

De Tajo continued: "HRH also spoke of how England would become the leader of a coalition consisting of France, Spain and Portugal while Germany would be free to march against Russia."

The report went on: "HRH said at dinner, I was got rid of by the Tories, and expressed himself with some force about the present Queen of England [the Queen Mother] whom he termed 'an ambitious woman'."

In a plea to Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister, to have the Windsor file exempted from the release of German war-time documents, Bevin urged the objective "to try to persuade United States government to co-operate with us in suppressing the documents concerned. They would possess the highest publicity value on account of the personalities involved and the types of intrigues described. Any disclosure would in my opinion do grave harm to the national interest."

Bevin said that a diplomatic initiative with the American occupation authorities was not enough. "We should go the lengths of asking the US government whether it would be willing that the file should be destroyed or at least handed over to us for safe-keeping."

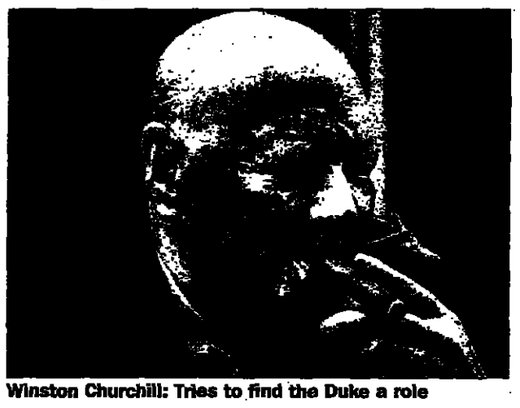
The American State Department, through Britain's ambassador to Washington, Lord Halifax, put Bevin in his place. "It appreciates the reasons which prompt the British government to wish to restrict circulation of certain documents but it cannot discount the importance to the history of the war of the German manoeuvres for a negotiated peace at that time. It would be unlawful for the secretary of state to authorise delivery of them to the British government."

Judge Jackson, the American prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials did, however, go along with a cover-up by promising not to raise the Windsor issue at the hearings.

The papers show that Churchill made overtures to find the duke a role as an *ex-officio* diplomat, a plan crushed by Bevin after an interview with the king. Attlee was told on 13 October, 1945 that the king asked Bevin about the possibility of the Duke of Windsor being made ambassador to Washington. Bevin replied that he didn't think "HRH should be given such employment". "The king", said the memo, "expressed satisfaction with the arrangement." Archibald Clark-Kerr, who was given the appointment, was told bluntly: "this is to warn you in case HRH approaches you on the matter [of an appointment]. He should be given no encouragement." Clark-Kerr was told to burn the telegram.

The pattern of the duke's future life, with its extravagance and peregrinations, emerged as soon as Germany surrendered and the concern it caused a Labour government presiding over an austerity programme is vividly caught. The Treasury asked the Cabinet for approval for an overdraft of £5,000 which the duke had asked to be forwarded to his Paris account at Lloyds Bank.

Pierson Dixon, senior diplomat at the Foreign Office, minuted: "The Treasury explain that there is no exchange problem involved but they naturally feel hesitation about the large sums of money being made available to the duke in France when ordinary British subjects there are severely restricted. It is reasonable I think that the duke and duchess should have ampler facilities than an ordinary British subject. It is really a question of degree. If they now proceed to live on an extravagant scale, going in for large scale entertaining and spending large sums on the decoration of their house, there is bound to be criticism..."



Winston Churchill: Tries to find the Duke a role

Officer shot unarmed suspect

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

An armed policeman shot and fatally wounded an unarmed suspected car thief in a busy street, a court heard yesterday

The case is believed to be the first time a police officer has been charged with murder for an offence allegedly committed while on duty.

PC Patrick Hodgson, 49, shot David Ewin, 38, twice in the arm and stomach with a handgun, in what a fellow police officer believed was not an armed incident, a jury at the Old Bailey was told. PC Hodgson has denied murdering Mr Ewin, who died two weeks later in hospital from internal injuries.

After the shooting PC Hodgson kept repeating "Why didn't he do as he was told?" and that he had no choice, said John Bevan, prosecuting. But, the prosecution told the jury: "If shooting Ewin was the only option, it is tantamount to saying that any car thief, driving recklessly, may reasonably be shot by a police officer."

PC Hodgson was part of a three-person crew of a Metropolitan Police armed response vehicle that had spotted a reportedly stolen car in Barnes, south-west London, in February last year. Mr Ewin ran out of a shop when the police arrived and got into the stolen Toyota.

PC Hodgson and his colleague PC Patrick Kelly had got out of their vehicle. The court heard that PC Hodgson managed to grab Mr Ewin round the neck through the open car window. There was a brief struggle PC Hodgson was in danger of being squashed between two cars and he began smashing his gun against the windscreen and shouting "armed police" before jumping clear and going around to the passenger side of the car.

"PC Hodgson took up a crouched stance at the passenger door pointing his gun at Ewin. PC Kelly described himself as ... confused and shocked because at no time did he regard what was happening as an armed incident," said Mr Bevan.

Two shots were then fired.

PC Hodgson said he shot Mr Ewin because he feared for his own life and civilians. But, Mr Bevan said, PC Hodgson and members of the public were not in danger from Ewin.

The case continues.

New hope for breast cancer sufferers

Glenda Cooper

Muscle and skin from a woman's back can now be used to correct breast disfigurement after surgery for cancer, doctors heard yesterday.

Speaking at the British Association of Plastic Surgeons' winter meeting, Mrs CC Koo, until recently a senior registrar in plastic surgery at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury, said that "very high rates" of patient satisfaction were reported after using this method.

The trend in the treatment of breast cancer, the most common malignancy in women, has shifted from mastectomy (removal of the entire breast) to breast conservation surgery (removal of only the diseased area).

However, as this treatment has gained popularity it has now been realised that the disfigurement which it can cause can be more upsetting than a mastectomy.

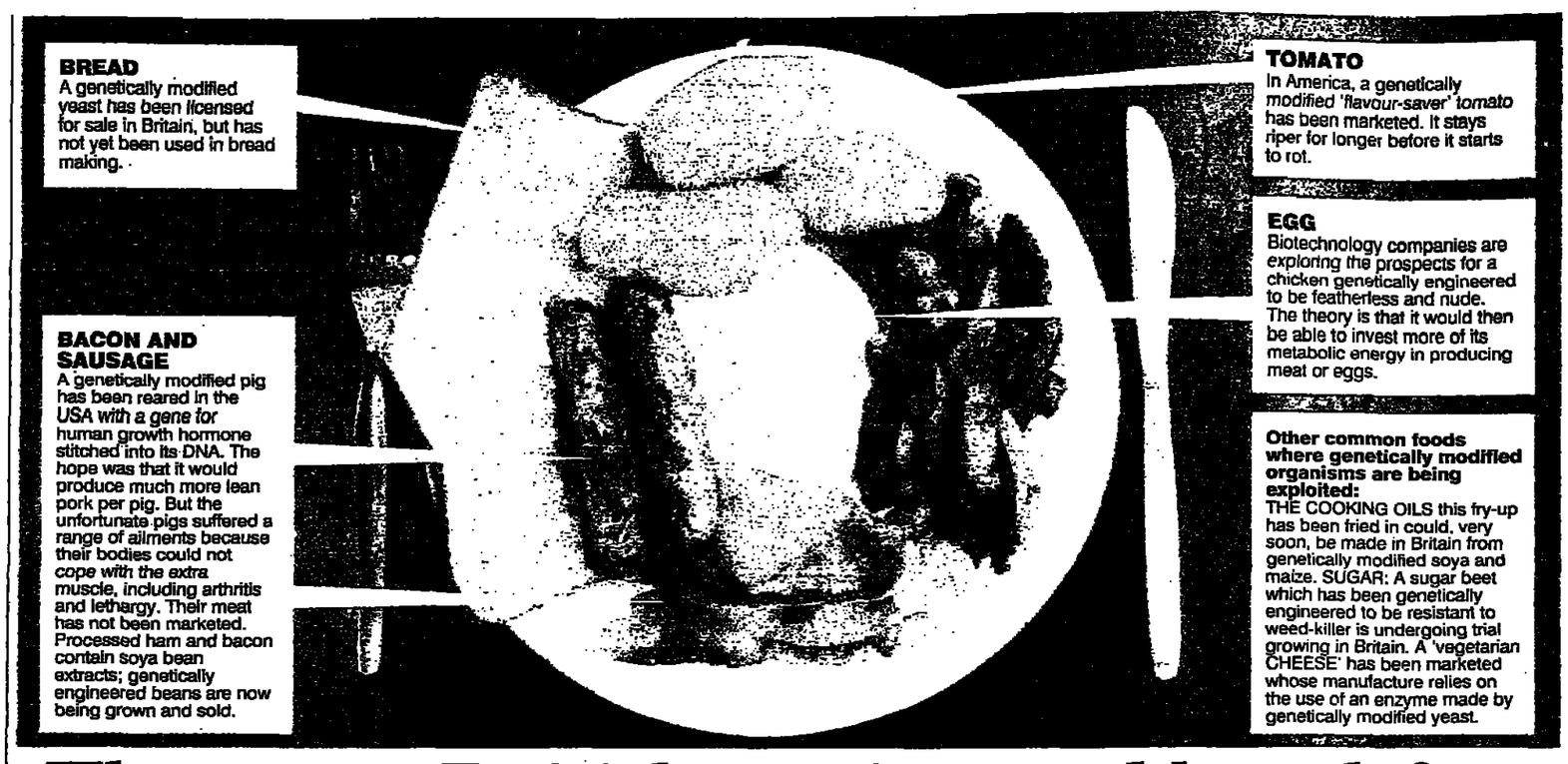
The treatment which has been pioneered at Stoke Mandeville, involves using muscle and skin from the woman's back, the *latissimus dorsi* myocutaneous flap. This muscle is hardly used at all "unless you are a champion climber" said Mrs Koo. After the diseased area has been removed, the muscle is used to reconstruct the affected breast so that it appears symmetrical to the other.

The operation, which is carried out by a plastic surgeon and a breast surgeon, takes two hours on average and the patient will usually have to stay in hospital for a week afterwards. This compares with a complete mastectomy which takes four to six hours and with a patient staying in for two weeks on average.

Each year in the UK there are 35,000 new cases of breast cancer and 15,000 deaths per year. A woman has a one in twelve chance of developing breast cancer in her lifetime. Mrs Koo estimated that this procedure would be suitable for 80 per cent of women with breast tumours.

At Stoke Mandeville, this procedure has been tried on 40 patients so far, with high rates of patient satisfaction. The women were aged 50 on average, and were in hospital for about a week. Of those who were suitable for the treatment, 60 per cent agreed to try it.

Complications were minimal. A few patients had fluid collecting in their backs, which was easily removed, and two had minor wound infections. In all cases the tumour was completely removed. "Since 1994 our experience with the first 40 cases has shown this method to be a simple yet effective way of treating the increasing number of women presenting with early breast cancer. The most important result is the high patient satisfaction rate," said Mrs Koo.



BREAD
A genetically modified yeast has been licensed for sale in Britain, but has not yet been used in bread making.

BACON AND SAUSAGE
A genetically modified pig has been reared in the USA with a gene for human growth hormone stitched into its DNA. The hope was that it would produce much more lean pork per pig. But the unfortunate pigs suffered a range of ailments because their bodies could not cope with the extra muscle, including arthritis and lethargy. Their meat has not been marketed. Processed ham and bacon contain soya bean extracts; genetically engineered beans are now being grown and sold.

TOMATO
In America, a genetically modified 'flavour-saver' tomato has been marketed. It stays riper for longer before it starts to rot.

EGG
Biotechnology companies are exploring the prospects for a chicken genetically engineered to be featherless and nude. The theory is that it would then be able to invest more of its metabolic energy in producing meat or eggs.

Other common foods where genetically modified organisms are being exploited:
THE COOKING OILS this fry-up has been fried in could, very soon, be made in Britain from genetically modified soya and maize. SUGAR: A sugar beet which has been genetically engineered to be resistant to weed-killer is undergoing trial growing in Britain. A 'vegetarian CHEESE' has been marketed whose manufacture relies on the use of an enzyme made by genetically modified yeast.

The great British engineered breakfast

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

In the early 1970s, scientists discovered how to move the hereditary material DNA from one micro-organism into another, unrelated one. It was one of greatest scientific breakthroughs because it meant that one lifeform could be suddenly given an ability or property quite foreign to its nature.

Now, around a quarter of a century later, the traditional English breakfast pictured above is the product of genetic engineering. All the food in the fry-up has been influenced in some way by developing techniques for stitching genes from one organism to another.

From the early days, scientists were aware that there were unknown but potentially grave dangers in what they were doing. Micro-organisms – bacteria and viruses – are, after all, the types of life which do mankind most harm, causing lethal and debilitating diseases.

The possibility existed that one with alien genes in its DNA could make some breakthrough in its ability to harm people. Geneticists were naturally concerned because, working in their laboratories to create the new lifeforms, they would be first in the firing line.

But after much debate, they mostly persuaded themselves that the new techniques could be used safely, and a host of research and development companies sprang up in developed countries, especially the USA.

Now, in the Nineties, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are starting to come to market in ways which touch all of our lives – yet most of us know next to nothing about them. To date there has been only one product on the shelves of a couple of British supermarket chains – cans of tomato puree made from a GMO tomato and sold by Safeway and Sainsbury. It has genes in it which allow the tomato to ripen on the vine, which in turn makes it cheaper to process. The savings are passed on to customers in a lower price.

But all that is about to change, because the British government and the European Union has licensed the use, in food, of genetically modified soya beans. The first consignment from the United States, the world's great soya bean grower, arrived in Liverpool at the end of last week.

Greenpeace attempted to prevent the cargo ship carrying it from unloading, but its activists who clambered on to cranes and stayed up them overnight were eventually arrested and charged with aggravated trespass.

Soya, a protein-packed vegetable, is found in about 60 per cent of processed foods – oils, spreads, cakes and biscuits, snacks, frozen deserts and even ham and bacon. Soya extract is put in the brine injected into the meats, which makes them draw in water and increase in bulk.

Its arrival presented a real problem for the supermarket chains – several of which had promised customers that any GMO products would be labelled as such. For one thing, such labels would suddenly appear like a rash. For another, the soya beans which have now crossed the Atlantic are a mixture. The great bulk of them are conventional. But 2 per cent are genetically modified.

The exporters argued that it would be impracticable to keep the modified beans separate. But it put the supermarkets and the firms which manufacture their food in a "like-it-or-lump-it" position, with no option to ask for GMO-free soya beans.

In Britain, the food industry has chosen to lump it, but in Germany – where concern about the issue runs high – Unilever has promised it will not use GMO soya.

Archbishop meets Pope in Vatican

Andrew Brown
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Rome — The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, arrived in Rome yesterday for three days of talks with the Vatican. The discussions will be "very tough and interesting" according to one of the Archbishop's party, but no one expects them to lead to a breakthrough.

Since the Church of England began ordaining female priests in 1994, it has been obvious that both sides have abandoned hope of formal union. The hostility over this issue was recently underlined when Cecilia Monge, a former Roman Catholic, was ordained in the Anglican Church in Rome where Dr Carey preached last night after his first meeting with the Pope. Substantive talks between the two leaders will be held tomorrow.

"Even in our sad separation, Anglicans and Catholics have not ceased to be brothers and sisters in the one Lord," Pope John Paul II said yesterday, greeting Dr Carey in his library. It was a mark of the Pope's decreasing vigour that the formal ceremony was held in the recesses of the Vatican rather than anywhere slightly more public.

Dr Carey told the Pope: "We cannot undo overnight doctrinal differences and the bitternesses that have resulted from the legacy of history. But we are able to confront them as fellow Christians."

news

Co Durham's Corbusier seeks to heal rift over troubled bridge

Nigel Burnham

On the eve of his 88th birthday, the artist and sculptor Victor Pasmore has broken his silence over the fate of a concrete folly proclaimed by English Heritage as "an internationally important masterpiece", but derided by local people as "a slimy old bridge" that should be demolished.

The Apollo Pavilion in Peterlee, County Durham, was conceived by Pasmore, a major figure of the post-war British avant garde, as "an architecture and sculpture of purely abstract form through which to walk, in which to linger and on which to play".

Built in 1963, it was the artist's post-modernist contribution to Peterlee, Durham's only new town where, eight years earlier, Pasmore had been appointed consulting director of urban design.

The "Corbusier of County Durham", then Master of Painting at Durham University, wanted to bring some cheer to the lives of the miners relocating from grimy pit villages. But to residents of the Sunny Blunts housing estate, which Pasmore also helped to plan and design, the pavilion and the polluted pond it spans has brought only hostility and misery as a target for vandalism and a meeting place for glue-sniffers and teenage courting couples.

Easington District Council feels the same way: It is objecting to English Heritage's decision to recommend to Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, that the sculpture should be listed Grade II*, taking the view that the pavilion has no architectural or historical merit to warrant preservation. It has asked the Government's Conservation Agency to abandon its plans to list the sculpture and assist instead in its demolition.

Concrete bungle? The Apollo Pavilion – both loved and loathed Photographs: North News

Joan Maslin, a district councillor who represents Sunny Blunts, is the pavilion's fiercest critic, having campaigned for 14 years for its removal. It is her fight to have his pavilion demolished which has prompted Pasmore to defend his work for the first time since 1982 when, on a visit to Peterlee, he said the vandalism had humanised his work, demonstrating its acceptance by the community.

In a letter to Mrs Maslin, written from his retirement home in Malta and prompted by an article in *The Independent* in September, Pasmore explains that the pavilion, together with the lake, were designed to form a "non-utilitarian" centre for the Sunny Blunts housing estate.

"One of the main problems of urban design," he writes, "seemed to me that there is no emotional centre like that provided by the Church in the past by its cathedrals. When [it was] decided to turn the stream running through Sunny Blunts into a lake I thought if its existence was emphasised by a large sculpture it might function as a purely visual centre. This led to the idea of a pavilion ...

"At that time the maintenance of the building was undertaken by the corporation itself so that it served as a kind of centre very well. But the trouble started when children and hooligans began to scribble over the interior walls upstairs with words and images, some of which were obscene. Naturally, this infuriated the residents living around and of course the local council ... I apologise for my design being distasteful to you: but I had to do something modern. To have put up an imitation Greek temple, a Gothic church or a Georgian mansion would have produced equally strong objections from a different source. I hope, therefore, you will have another look at the pavilion!"

Although flattered to have received Pasmore's letter, Mrs Maslin remains unmoved. "The reason why the sculpture was put here in the first place doesn't mean anything to the people – most of whom are pensioners – who live here. It is all very well these famous artists and architects designing things and getting a fat fee, but it's ordinary people who have to live with the consequences of the desolation they create.

"All people here think of the pavilion is that it is a heap of dirty, slimy concrete covered in graffiti which youths climb up to have sex on, and from which to urinate on passers-by. It should be destroyed and forgotten about, not preserved."

Blain Harwood, an English Heritage historian, could not be contacted yesterday, but recently insisted that the sculpture was a national treasure which needed to be restored and properly managed and maintained. "It's an absolutely unique work of considerable international importance," she said. "It was an extraordinary thing to put up in the heart of a new town. There isn't another piece of public sculpture like it anywhere in the country."

Victor Pasmore: 'An imitation Greek temple would have produced equally strong objections'

Jail warning for stalker who terrorised woman

An obsessive stalker was warned by a judge yesterday that he faces a "substantial" jail sentence after being found guilty of waging a four-year campaign which left his victim in fear of her life.

Peter Smith, 51, a restaurateur of West Wickham, Kent, once sent the woman a miniature cardboard coffin and on other occasions sent her offensive presents and literature through the post. The father-of-three's relentless pursuit of the terrified woman, on no less than 300 occasions, left her emotionally scarred for life.

Her trauma was so severe it amounted to actual bodily harm, the jury at Knightsbridge Crown Court decided. But it cleared him of a more serious charge alleging grievous bodily harm as well as a second count of causing actual bodily harm relating to an allegation that he drove his car at her.

Remanding Smith in custody for social and psychiatric reports, Judge Richard Walker, said: "You face a substantial prison sentence unless it becomes apparent to me that it is appropriate that your case should be disposed of under the Mental Health Act."

He added that having seen the way he conducted himself in the witness box, it seemed there were grounds for having "concern" about his future behaviour. As a result the judge thought it would be a good idea if his eventual sentencing remarks were used for granting a "permanent injunction" banning him from ever contacting his victim again after his release.

Smith's campaign of "intimidating, calculated and cruel behaviour" started in September 1992. The 48-year-old mother of two told the jury it began with repeated calls to both her London home and office.

For a while his behaviour was little more than annoying. But things took a more serious turn when he posted her a toy-sized coffin together with a box of matches and a note which read: "Burn this, you bitch. RIP." He also started lying in wait for the woman outside her place of work. Sometimes he would content himself with a glare, but on others he would block her path and threaten her.

Throughout, he was bombarding her with letters which would one day declare his undying love, and on others refer to her in such disparaging terms.

She told the jury that by this time her nerves were so frayed she was taking medication for hypertension. "It was making me feel desperately unhappy, physically ill and emotionally shattered. I was becoming frightened of even going out of my house in the morning."

Repeated complaints to the police resulted in his being bound over by magistrates to keep the peace on no less than three occasions. But Smith, she said, was not to be deterred.

In evidence, he claimed he had believed the woman was interested in him, and said the Crown had exaggerated its case.

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Collector's item: The dress which Ekland wore for her wedding (above) to Peter Sellers in 1964 went on sale (right) at Christie's in London yesterday

Sixties icon puts her past on sale

Marianne Macdonald
Arts Correspondent

The short, flower-encrusted wedding dress worn by Britt Ekland for her 1964 wedding to comic Peter Sellers was put up for sale by the Swedish actress last night as part of a bid to "simplify her life". Acclaimed as one of the world's most beautiful women, she also sold photographs documenting her work as a model, marriage to Sellers and motherhood.

Many of the clothes offered by the icon, who also partnered the singer Rod Stewart, recalled her heyday in the 1960s and 1970s: long, lace frocks, sequinned ponchos and multi-coloured jerseys. Also up for grabs in the auction, held at Christie's South Kensington, were leather shoes, handbags and jewellery, a brass double bed, and Rod Stewart gold and platinum presentation discs.

Collectors could even buy a brooch outline of Ekland's lips, by sculptor John Cotter, who sold replicas in bronze, aluminium and plastic with the slogan "Shut your eyes and imagine it's Britt you're kissing".

Too many students pass with honours

Judith Judd
Education Editor

What is a graduate? Academics involved in a two-and-a-half-year study of graduate standards have had difficulty in deciding.

They have come up with a list of possible characteristics, such as the ability to analyse, investigate, create products. They also suggest that graduates might be emotionally resilient, enterprising, able to work in teams and to empathise. And, of course, they need a knowledge of their subject.

The difficulty, says the group in a report for the Higher Education Quality Council published yesterday, is that some of the attributes could equally well belong to people who have never been near a university.

While understanding the limits of a subject or knowing about contemporary research might be exclusive to graduates, critical and analytical skills are found at every level of education.

The group decided that it was impossible to come up with a single check-list of graduate characteristics, although they thought they did have something that other people lacked. Or rather they should have.

At present, the draft report says, some of those who get low-class or pass degrees do not possess distinguishing characteristics. It recommends a review of classification, establishing minimum standards which might mean that students who at present get thirds and passes would not qualify as honours graduates. There would be another system of awards below that threshold.

It is the first attempt to promote nationally acceptable thresholds in universities and to address concern about differing degree standards since the rapid expansion of the system.

Roger Brown, the council's chief executive, said: "We want to avoid the situation where certain degrees from certain institutions are not tradable currency. That is what is under strain."

Eighty per cent of students are now on honours degree courses compared with 40 per cent in the Sixties. "The balance of honours-level degrees ... seems out of line with the needs of an expanded higher education system," the report says.

It argues that there is no way of knowing "whether the standard of one degree in a given class in a given subject is comparable to that of another institution; still less whether there is comparability between subjects over the passage of time". Universities determine their own assessment policies but all use external examiners. The report says that the influence of external examiners has declined and needs strengthening.

Another proposal is that, to establish benchmarks for general skills, graduates might be given aptitude tests before going on to postgraduate study or employment such as those in use in the United States and in British business schools.

Professor John Stoddart, the council's chairman, said British universities might be accused of shooting themselves in the foot by posing some of the questions raised in the report. "Many other countries have blindfolds over their eyes. We have identified the challenges and that puts us far ahead of other countries," he said.

DAILY POEM

From Nothing to the First of You

By Glyn Maxwell

Where Nothing wants you, wails it doesn't,
howls you into wretched hugging,
strips you from the sea to merely
sling you back half-stiff half-orphan –

When Nothing cowered and humped in coves
and mapped your mazy plunging progress,
made a boat of bone of fishbird,
wrecked it undershoe and shivered –

Something drew you, drew you on,
set down the silver bobbing throne
on somewhere, cast you cold about it,
something had become expectant –

All your evil, ice and failure,
all your slaughterous fool palaver,
rotten anger, righteous hunger,
death hot, death cold, death in armour
better this than Nothing ever –

And Nothing knows it when it's lonely,
plotting progress of tomorrow's
torment in a vein of envy,
hates you with a smile while sleeping –
shakes that dogging dream of something,
aches all morning of its echoes,
scratched out then out your surname
stuck in a loveheart, loving Nothing.

In August 1994 Simon Armitage and Glyn Maxwell set out for Iceland to retrace the journey made by WH Auden and Louis MacNeice 60 years previously. The result is *Moon Country* (Faber, £7.99) a prose and verse portrait of contemporary Iceland and one of the year's more imaginative travel books.

Tyrolese enraged by cost of the drive to unity

In her second report on monetary union **Sarah Helm** meets some Austrian sceptics

High anxiety: The Tyrol is paying heavily for integration, with traffic through the Brenner Pass likely to double by 2020

Steinach – High above the Austrian alps, there are lorries in the sky. Alpfen Appel, a 40-tonner, is passing through a mountain cloud. A solid line of trucks snakes over the Tyrolese village of Steinach every day, spanning a dramatic bridge, on the edge of the Brenner Pass.

"There are more and more each year," said Hubert Rauch, the mayor, who points to where trees are dying of pollution. He realises the traffic will be worse when the euro comes. As trade increased, spurred by the single market and open frontiers, the volume of goods passing through the Brenner Pass reached 30 million tons. When currency barriers fall, traffic is expected to double by 2020.

Not only is this shattering the peace and ecology, it is also shattering Austrian support for the euro and the EU. Its new Austrian "citizens" see that the leaders pushing through the single currency have no intention of paying for improved transit networks or enforcing environmental protection.

Recently Neil Kinnock, the EU transport commissioner, saw the Brenner problem, from a helicopter. But his proposals for a £3.5bn rail tunnel have been shelved, because no country wants to pay, particularly when member-states are cutting back to meet the Maastricht criteria for the single currency.

At Steinach, all the contradictions of Europe's drive for political and monetary union are writ large. Increased trade has benefited the Austrian Tyrol, which depends heavily on links with Bavaria and northern Italy. There is a *de facto* common currency, as traders take lire, shillings or marks. The Austrian and Italian Tyrolese regions recently banded together as a "European region".

Innsbruck banks will lose 2,000 jobs when exchange-rate transactions end but they support the euro overall. Mr Rauch admits he went shopping in Italy when the lira was cheap but he also welcomed news that Italy is rejoining the exchange rate mechanism. A stronger lira may stop his trips but it should also stop German tourists by-passing Austrian resorts like his for Italian ones.

The merits of a barrier-free Europe, are, however, countered by the attractions of protectionism in Austria. When 66 per cent of people voted "yes" to Europe in the 1994 referendum, many said they did so because they felt they had no choice but to join after years of living shoulder-to-shoulder with the former Soviet bloc. Now they doubt the benefits as Vienna imposes "Euro taxes" to meet the Maastricht criteria.

In the Tyrol, the traffic problem makes people reappraise the value of economic and physical barriers. Switzerland barred lorries over 28 tons, which means the juggernauts are funnelled through Austria. When Austria decided to raise the toll on lorries through the Brenner Pass, the European Commission launched proceedings against it for breaching single-market rules. "People are making the connection between the traffic problem and Europe," said Fritz Staudigl, an official in Innsbruck. "They see goods being carried for miles ... And they are asking: 'What's the point? Why should we suffer so Swedes can have Italian grapes in winter?' "

The Tyrolese also question European agricultural policies. They want to know why German over-production of meat and milk should be forcing such large Bavarian exports to Italy. There is also anxiety about illegal immigration. Three hundred customs officers from the Brenner area have lost their jobs since EU membership. Soon Austria is to join the Schengen agreement, which means ending all passport checks at its EU frontiers. At the Brenner, according to rumours in Steinach, 20 illegal immigrants are stopped a day.

Austria's fears about the euro are most commonly voiced in the simplest ways. People are scared of losing their strong currency. "People ... remember how they lost their savings during the post-war hyper-inflations," said Mr Staudigl. "Older people still talk of how they sold a house and found they could only buy a loaf of bread."

Tomorrow: Northern Italy

God 'ordered women's deaths'

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

Exactly four years after the brutal murder of two British women on a South African beach, a 26-year-old man has confessed to the killings. Elias Naom Sibiya told a court in Durban he hacked and stabbed the holidaymakers Julie Godwin and Elizabeth Over, both 30, because God had deemed it "the day on which they were supposed to die".

His court appearance came after he turned himself over to the police at the weekend. Mr Sibiya claimed the timing was deliberate. Overcome with remorse after the attack, he said he had begged God for a period of four years.

Speaking through an interpreter, Mr Sibiya calmly described how he attacked the women with a bushknife and a spear in their station-wagon at Nine Mile beach on the Maputaland coast.

Their naked and wounded bodies were washed up, just hours later, near the Mozambique border.

He had robbed the women but four months after the attack he said he felt so guilty he burnt everything he had stolen along with his weapons and clothes. After that he had felt closer to God and begged him to be patient until the victims families had forgotten their sorrow.

Mr Sibiya did not request legal representation at the hearing and said he would accept any punishment. He said he was just walking on the beach when he saw the women and "that was when everything began to happen". The magistrate ordered him to see the district surgeon and he was remanded in custody until 23 December.

Ms Over and Mrs Godwin, mother of a 23-month-old girl, had been friends for more than 11 years. Ms Over, from St Albans, Hertfordshire, had recently moved to South Africa to work as an advertising executive in Durban. Mrs Godwin, from Spratton, Northamptonshire, was to have been joined by her husband Tim and her daughter later on the trip.

Chirac says Europe needs its own spy satellite, free of US

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

France wants Europe to develop its own spy satellite facility as a "necessary precondition for achieving strategic autonomy", President Jacques Chirac said yesterday. Underlining the desire of the Gaullist government for a European defence capacity that could operate independently of the United States, Mr Chirac said he also favoured the inclusion of defence structures within the European Union.

He was speaking on the second day of the annual assembly of the West European Union, the political arm of Nato in Europe, just a year after France announced its decision to rejoin most Nato structures. He was the first French president ever to address the 48-year-old organisation.

France and Germany are already co-operating on the development of a reconnaissance satellite. But Mr Chirac's proposal went further, calling for a "real European capability in space intelligence" and making it clear this was needed for "strategic autonomy".

The lack of its own satellite reconnaissance capacity makes Europe entirely dependent on the US for military operations abroad. Europe's other main deficiency is the lack of large military transport planes. Mr Chirac did not mention this, though he did appeal for the embryonic European defence agency (currently comprising France, Germany, Britain and Italy) to become "a competitive industrial and technological base".

These were two of four points Mr Chirac set out as France's programme for its presidency of the WEU which begins next January. The others were the streamlining of current armed forces co-operation in Europe – which currently includes the mainly Franco-German Eurocorps and the mainly Franco-British European Air Group – and closer co-operation in operational planning between the WEU and Nato.

The tenor of Mr Chirac's speech, with its strong emphasis on European defence autonomy, appeared to offer at least half an answer to a question widely posed when France rejoined Nato last year. Was its return an acceptance that in the post-Cold War world it needed the shelter of the Atlantic Alliance, or did it see its membership as a stage towards the creation of stronger European pillar within Nato which could eventually become an autonomous defence alliance?

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WE'LL OPEN OUR SKIES. WILL BILL OPEN HIS?

Right now, the British Government is locked in negotiations with the Americans over an 'open skies' deal for liberalisation of aviation between our two countries.

Whilst Britain is quite happy to welcome American airlines to the UK, the Americans aren't prepared to welcome UK airlines to the US. And that, we believe, is just not cricket.

Encouragingly, Sir George Young, our Secretary of State for Transport agrees with us.

Whilst giving evidence to the Transport Select Committee earlier this year, Sir George said:

"We will not simply roll over and accept the US version of liberalisation, known misleadingly in my opinion as 'open skies', which is clearly designed to tilt the market in favour of US airlines. We shall be seeking a new air service agreement which gives our carriers an opportunity to compete with US carriers on equal terms."

So how *unequal* are the terms at the moment?

What the Americans want is to be able to fly as many US aircraft as they like into Britain's airports, and then to pick up passengers in Britain and fly them on to Europe and the rest of the world. (Which would be fine if there were enough take off and landing slots.)

But what the Americans aren't prepared to give the UK is the right to land at US airports and then fly passengers on to other destinations in the US.

Nor are they prepared to give up any of the incredibly protectionist laws limiting the UK's right to invest in US airlines. Even though the US is already allowed to invest in the UK's airlines.

Nor are they even prepared to give up their one sided policy that dictates that US Government people must fly only on US airlines.

In fact the only so called concession that the American Government is prepared to make has nothing to do with 'open skies' at all.

It is to sanction the monopolistic merger between British Airways and American Airlines.

A merger that would normally be deemed illegal by the Americans because it is so anti-competitive. Especially as between them BA and AA control the lion's share of Heathrow's take off and landing slots.

In short, this is not an 'open' but a 'closed skies' deal. It offers nothing for the flying public. But it does offer a juicy monopoly for two of the world's biggest airlines.

We urge Sir George Young to stick to his guns, and negotiate a deal that will create a level playing field for all Britain's airlines, and that won't disadvantage either the British or American flying public.

Any other deal is most unwelcome.

virgin atlantic

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Australian public back move to republic

Robert Milliken
Sydney

A new opinion poll in Australia has revealed for the first time there is sufficient public support to change the constitution to make the country a republic.

Published yesterday in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age*, of Melbourne, the poll showed 55 per cent of Australians want to replace the Queen with an Australian president as their head of state, a rise of 4 per cent since a similar poll was taken last year.


John Howard: Promised to hold convention on republic

More significant is the fact that a majority of voters in five of Australia's six states want a republic. This is the crucial test that republicans would have to pass in order to change the country's constitution. For it to be altered, a referendum needs not only an overall majority of votes but also a majority vote in at least four of the six states.

This has made the constitution notoriously hard to change. Since 1901, when it came into force, only eight of 42 proposals to amend it have passed popular referendums. But, according to the opinion poll, Tasmania is the only state where republicans are still in a minority, at 46 per cent. In New South Wales their support stands at 57 per cent.

The latest republican opinion poll has put renewed pressure on the federal government, led by John Howard, to press ahead with its election promise to stage a convention next year as a first step towards holding a referendum on a republic by 2000.

Mr Howard is a monarchist, who has shown every sign of trying to sweep republicanism under the carpet since his conservative coalition government's election last March. But republicans, including MPs in the Liberal Party, which Mr Howard leads, have called on him in to honour his promise.

At a republican rally attended by 2,000 people in Sydney on Sunday, Gladys Berejiklian, president of the Young Liberals in New South Wales, urged Mr Howard to hold a referendum. Robert Hughes, the Australian author and critic, told the audience: "There is nothing, absolutely nothing, Australian about our present head of state, the reigning British monarch. The monarch's role as the simultaneous head of state of Great Britain and Australia had its obvious uses when the interests of the two nations overlapped and were in essence the same. But today they are not always the same and, in the coming century, they will be less so."

Republicanism crosses party lines and among Australians aged between 25 and 54, support stands at 60 per cent.


Dummy run: Students with an effigy of Miljana Markovic, wife of Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, during a demonstration yesterday in Belgrade Photograph: AFP

Russian roulette as casino comes to the backwaters

Helen Womack reports on a post-Soviet route to success

Yelets — The local newspaper reporter declined the black caviar sandwiches offered by Gennady Savenkov, arms-trader-turned-casino-owner, catering for the few people with money in the depressed central Russian town of Yelets. "I do not want to be dependent on that man," he said.

But a sandwich consumed will hardly inhibit your correspondent from telling the truth about the Ph Club, or as much of the truth as one can ever establish in this land of absurdity.

Depending on whom you ask, Mr Savenkov is either a greedy villain or a hero struggling for the right to free enterprise in one of the most staunchly Communist pockets of the provinces. But nobody is indifferent to "Papa Genna", whose taste for nylon sports suits belies his wealth and power.

He admits to having spent "big money" financing the political opponents of the Communist-leaning mayor of Yelets, Viktor Sokovikh, so far to no avail. Mr Sokovikh remains in office, "putting up endless bureaucratic obstacles to enterprising businessmen", as the casino-owner says.

But Mr Savenkov has had one victory as the regional court has just overruled the mayor and allowed him to register the Ph Club (Ph for Phoenix). "Seventy per cent of my energy goes into the war with the mayor. But thank God there are some people who respect the law," he said as he welcomed the press to his leisure complex.

A sauna and restaurant are still being built but the casino is already in full swing - by Yelets' standards. In other words, at 10 o'clock last Thursday night, two clients were moving from the poker table to the roulette wheel, from the roulette wheel to the black jack table, attended by a veritable army of croupiers, cocktail waitresses and security guards.

"It gets busier," Mr Savenkov said, sipping a champagne cocktail. "We are already breaking even. Rich people come from Lipetsk, Voronezh and Moscow. Typically, they play with up to $2,000 a night. But yes, I have to admit, you can count the number of wealthy people in Yelets on the fingers of one hand."

There is no doubt that Mr Savenkov is the fattest finger. A former army officer who helped carry out the state trade in weapons to Soviet clients such as Angola, Ethiopia and Iraq, he made his undisclosed personal fortune by opening a network of petrol stations on the road to Moscow. "Undiluted petrol" is his slogan.

> 'I admit, you can count the number of wealthy people on the fingers of one hand'

With his petrol business, he is indeed providing a public service for. Before him, a driver who did not have the foresight to fill his tank in Moscow, 400 km to the north, could find himself spending the night in his car on the empty road, waiting for someone with a canister to take pity on him. Now, instead of motorists begging for petrol, the road is lined with people selling vases and television sets, the left-over production from bankrupt local factories.

Unemployment in the town is high. Giving work to 250 people, Mr Savenkov is proud to call himself a major employer. How much this man, who has a four-storey country house and a fleet of cars, pays his workers is "one of my secrets".

Galya, a cocktail waitress whose dark make-up gave her eyes a bruised look, was sullen. "I'm always unhappy. I have an unhappy personality," she said. Natasha, a trained nurse-turned-croupier, was more cheerful. "If they have earned the money, they have the right to throw it away," she said, when I asked what she thought of the clients.

The players that night were sportsman Boris Gridnev, who has been entered 17 times in the *Guinness Book of Records* for feats of strength, and his girlfriend, Vera. "We have been bitten by the gambling bug," laughed Vera, adding that the couple usually spent about $100 a time.

"The players are sick. They are like alcoholics. I do not pity them," commented the owner, who said he never gambled himself and drank only in moderation. Whom did he pity? "Children," he said, adding that he gave some of his money to charity. For example, the local ambulance service received his petrol free of charge.

But he admitted he found as many ways as possible to reduce his tax burden. "The taxes are too high in this country," he said. "The authorities are cutting the branch on which we sit."

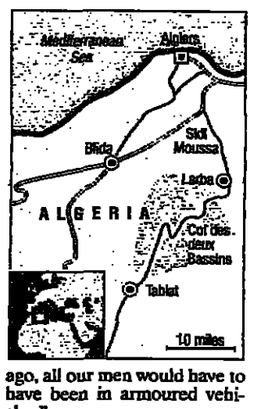
Did he fear the rich could be swept away in a new Russian revolution? "Russia will not go Communist again," he said. Then after a moment's thought, he added: "Of course, I was a Communist once myself, you know." Gennady Savenkov is a survivor, a man who will adapt and thrive whichever politicians are in power.

Massacre marks new low point in Algerian war

INSIDE ALGERIA — Robert Fisk

Algiers — We were sitting in the mess at Harrache when the first explosion changed the air pressure in the room. The commandant looked at his colleague, then at us. "It's not a bomb," he said with absolute confidence. Then there was a second clap of sound and the corporal at the window said: "Bomb." On the table, the military radio crackled into a mixture of French and machine-gun-speed Algerian Arabic. "A fourth explosion!" – "A fifth!" From all over the city of Algiers, the gendarmes were reporting what they could hear. The air pressure changed again and the commandant stood up and put his kepi on. Then the radio told him what he wanted to hear. "It's a security forces operation at Sidi Moussa."

In the warm winter sunshine outside the barracks, the blast of rocket-propelled grenades was unmistakable. "The security forces have a terrorist group surrounded," the commandant said. Several gendarmes had gathered in the barrack square, all looking south-west towards the village of Sidi Moussa, invisible through the pale heat haze below the mountains. Algeria's war was out of sight but not out of mind; and certainly not out of earshot. Three motor-cycle cops – back on the roads these past four months for the first time in more than four years – roared into the compound. "Things have improved," the commandant insisted. "Only a few months ago, all our men would have to have been in armoured vehicles."



But from the villages beyond Sidi Moussa, on the road from Larba to Tablat, terrible stories are emerging, more frightful than any that have yet come out of Algeria's secret war. The Islamic Armed Group (GIA), one rumour says, moved into the villages on the Col des Deux Bassins – on the steep hillsides of the Mitidja – and cut the throats of up to a hundred men, women and children at the weekend. "The government doesn't want the news out yet because it will cast a bad reflection on last week's constitutional referendum," an Algerian businessman had told us two hours earlier. "This is the most savage crime I have ever heard of." If true, it would be the most horrible atrocity yet committed in the Algerian war, worse than this month's throat-cutting at Sidi el-Kebir, comparable to the epic massacres of the 1954-62 war of independence against France.

But is it true? Not a word has appeared in the government-controlled press, save for a dramatic account – third-person and with no quoted eyewitnesses – of the "liquidation" of a GIA unit of 12 men near Ghardaia. Ouled Abderbi, the district "emir" of the GIA group in the "wilaya" (governerate) of Ghardaia, had been "annihilated", according to *Le Matin*. The throat-cutters who had savaged the villagers of Bouferkine were no more. No prisoners. It was a familiar story.

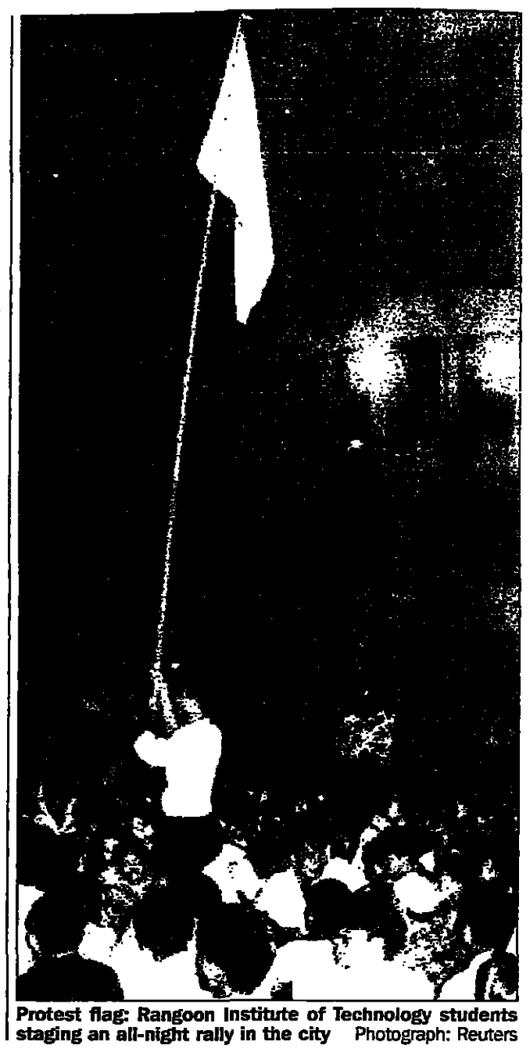
And when we asked the commandant about reports of the Col des Deux Bassins massacre, he raised his eyebrows. "We received information that four men from Sonagaz [the Algerian state gas company] had their throats cut around there. Nothing more." But even among the Algiers gendarmerie, the barbarism of this war comes through. Just in passing, the commandant mentions to us that the "Islamists", "thieves as much as terrorists," he calls them – have run short of ammunition. "We find their Kalashnikovs and lots of [Israeli-made] Uzi automatic weapons, but no bullets," he says. Could that be, I ask, why they cut so many throats, to save ammunition? The commandant leans across the table and points at me. "Exactly," he replies. And then – another aside, a passing comment – he adds: "They don't only use knives to cut throats now. They are using saws, wood-cutters' saws, to cut the throats of their prisoners."

> 'The government doesn't want the news out ... it will cast a bad reflection on the referendum'

"Don't believe the stories that the GIA has been infiltrated," another officer says. "If it had been, we would have won the war by now. A year ago, at the presidential elections, they pardoned about 1000 prisoners and let them out of jail. Many were intimidated back into the GIA. They've just freed another 60 or so men and we've been told to keep an eye on them. But they live outside Blida and it's hard enough to get into some of those places, let alone watch the guys we want to watch."

Back in the capital, the stories start again. There are another 21 dead civilians in a village south of the capital, an Algerian journalist says. Another 11 people were slaughtered in Baraki at the weekend. At least one GIA group is retreating through the Mitidja hills, setting mines behind them.

And I remember what the commandant said as we sipped coffee in his mess. "I saw a schoolgirl in the Blida morgue who had had her throat cut. I don't know if it's true what they said, that her murderers cut "GIA" on her hand. I didn't see her hands. But I saw her head. They had almost completely severed it from her body."



Protest flag: Rangoon Institute of Technology students staging an all-night rally in the city Photograph: Reuters

Burma protest arrests

Rangoon, Burma (AP) — The military government blamed "political elements" yesterday for inciting one of Burma's largest protests in years. An unknown number of protesters are thought to be in detention.

Police, meanwhile, erected roadblocks on streets leading to pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's home, stopping journalists in the Burmese capital from meeting her. It was unknown how long the barriers would remain in place.

There appeared to be no clear link between the demonstration by about 1,000 students on Monday and Ms Suu Kyi's movement, though the Nobel Peace Prize winner was quoted by the BBC as saying they had a shared opposition to injustice.

The protesters, mostly from the Rangoon Institute of Technology, had staged a sit-in at Rangoon University and had marched around the capital all night, at one point stopping outside the US Embassy.

They seemed divided between those stressing calls for freedom and human rights and the majority stressing non-political demands, such as urging the government to grant students more independence and investigate police brutality.

Ms Suu Kyi said yesterday: "I would like the world to know that the repression in Burma is getting worse.

significant shorts

Serbs gag last independent radio station

Serbian authorities shut Belgrade's only independent radio station amid a wave of protests against President Slobodan Milosevic.

Radio B-92's transmitter, which, unlike state broadcasters, gave wide coverage to the rallies, was switched off, the editor, Veran Matic, said. A letter from the communication ministry said it was operating illegally. The crackdown came despite Western appeals to protect independent media and showed the Milosevic government was taking an increasingly tough line to halt street demonstrations. *Reuters – Belgrade*

Herzog's son in casino scandal

Joel Herzog, the son of the former president of Israel, is on remand in a French prison in connection with a casino corruption case involving the mayor of Cannes. Mr Herzog, whose Swiss company owns the Riviera casino at the Noga Hilton in the resort, was detained for questioning on Monday. The mayor, Michel Mouillot, is also in prison, accused of taking bribes for granting casino licences. *Mary Dejevsky – Paris*

U-turn on mercy killing

A son of the first man to commit legally sanctioned euthanasia is now fighting the law that allowed his father to end his own life.

Rod Dent, 40, supported legalised mercy killing immediately after his father Bob, 66, became the first terminally ill patient to commit suicide, on 22 September, under a Northern Territory law that permits doctor-assisted mercy killing – the first of its kind in the world.

But Mr Dent said he now believes that his father, who was suffering from prostate cancer, would not have killed himself if he had had access to proper palliative care. Australia's Federal Parliament is considering a Bill which, if passed, would override the territory's legislation. *AP – Canberra*

Rebels poised to attack towns in Zaire

Zairian rebels have surrounded the three major towns in north-eastern Zaire remaining in government hands and will soon attack them, a rebel leader said.

Jean Kabongo, a senior member of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation (Congo-Zaire), said his troops have surrounded Kisangani, Zaire's fifth-largest city. *AP – Goma*

New governor for Gibraltar

Britain yesterday appointed the former Foreign Office minister Sir Richard Luce as governor of Gibraltar, the first time in nearly 300 years the post has gone to a non-military man.

Gibraltarians interpret the appointment as a further step in the drawdown of Britain's military presence on the Rock, and the prelude to clearer political exchanges between Gibraltar, London and Madrid. One commentator expressed relief that Sir Richard was an experienced politician and not a career diplomat.

Sir Richard, who stood down from parliament in the 1992 elections, resigned as Minister of State in 1982, along with his boss Lord Carrington, on the outbreak of the Falklands war. *Elizabeth Nash – Madrid*

Iran to ban Western words

Iran may soon step up its campaign to wipe out Western cultural influences with a Bill that bans the use of Western terms.

The Bill – the Prohibition of Usage of Foreign Names, Words and Expressions – received preliminary approval last year. It requires government and non-government institutions to refrain from using Western terms in their reports, speeches, correspondence and interviews. *Reuters – Tehran*

Saudis seize aphrodisiacs

Saudi Arabia has seized banned chewing gum and drops that claimed to improve male sexual performance, a Saudi newspaper reported.

The stimulants, sold discreetly by pharmacies run by "weak souls" in the conservative Muslim kingdom, were apparently smuggled from Israel, the daily *al-Eqtisadiah* said.

Last year, Saudi Arabia executed four Turks for trying to smuggle aphrodisiac drugs into the country. *Reuters – Dubai*

Chinese to evict migrant families

Teresa Poole
Peking

The ability of an army of migrant workers to slip through the net of China's tough population controls has prompted a crackdown in the booming southern city of Shenzhen, where 906 migrant families are being thrown out of town with two weeks' notice because they have exceeded the permitted birth rate.

The Peking *Economic Daily* yesterday reported that the Shenzhen city authorities had confiscated the migrants' residence certificates, revoked their labour permits and business licences, and ordered the housing department to stop renting apartments and shops to them.

All city residents in China must have a *hukou*, or household registration, and when migrants arrive and settle in an urban area they must obtain a temporary registration. The 906 families will probably return to their rural home villages, or move to another coastal city.

The penalty for breaking family-planning regulations can be severe. In impoverished areas, peasants face having their houses demolished. In cities, punishments are heavy fines and demotion at work. In April this year, a Peking court fined one couple 50,000 yuan (£4,000) for having a second child. Human rights groups have documented cases of forced abortions and sterilizations.

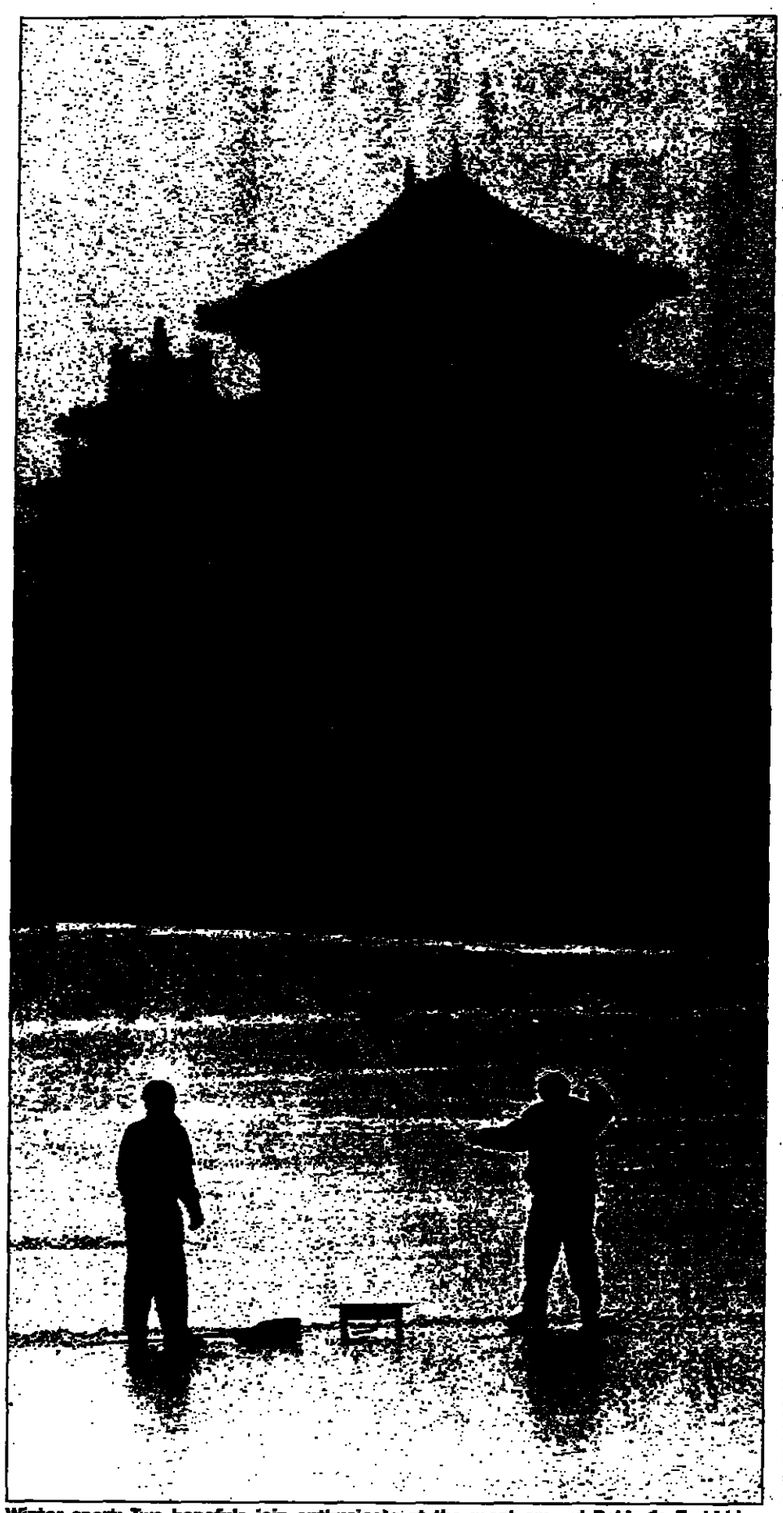
The government is desperate to make sure China's population does not exceed 1.3 billion by 2,000. The strict population-control policy permits one child per couple in cities, and usually two in the countryside. However, China has up to 100 million rural workers who over the past decade have moved into the cities and fast-growing coastal regions where work in factories and construction sites is available. Their mobility has meant they have escaped many of the family-planning restrictions imposed on the indigenous city population and static rural inhabitants.

Wang Guoqing, the Family Planning Commission policy director, said: "The transient population in keeps growing because most members in this group are of reproductive age, and many stay away from their home towns for a long time."

According to regulations, the migrant worker's home town and his or her new place of residence in theory share responsibility for compliance with family planning regulations. In practice, neither is likely to be monitoring the situation. Migrant workers often rent accommodation through private landlords, and move from job to job, escaping the strict vigilance of permanent city residents who must obtain permission from their "work units" to marry or to get pregnant.

The fact that the Shenzhen case was reported in the *Peking Economic Daily* probably means the city government is eager to demonstrate to Peking that it is cracking down on illicit births. Shenzhen, bordering Hong Kong and the site of China's first Special Economic Zone, is one of the richest parts of the country. In such regions, wealthy rural families are now opting to pay the fines or the bribes necessary in order to enable them to have more children.

China's family planning programme has been widely criticized by Western countries for its punitive nature. Over the past year, the government has admitted it has failed to convince peasant families of the benefits of fewer children, and now says it is putting more emphasis on linking family planning to alleviation of poverty.



Winter sport: Two hopefuls join enthusiasts at the moat around Peking's Forbidden City yesterday for the start of the highly popular ice-fishing season Photograph: AFP

Peking alarmed as illegal school fees force pupils to quit

Nationwide inspection is launched to stem emptying of classes in poor regions. **Teresa Poole** reports

Ansai — In Chenguan township, north-west China, Kang Xisai was one of the casualties of China's cash-strapped rural education system. He did not start school until he was nine years old because his family was "too poor" to afford the fees, he said. And when his parents finally scraped together the money, there was only the basic village school, with just three teachers.

During the early Communist era in China, rudimentary schooling was provided free to the nation's children as part of the so-called "iron rice bowl" welfare system. It was not fancy, but at least it was free. But when economic reform took hold in the Eighties, the schools found themselves desperate for money. State funding was no longer sufficient, and even when money was available it was often illegally diverted by local governments away from schools and into speculative business schemes. Across the country, including the poorest areas, parents were suddenly introduced to a new concept - the bill for school fees.

Aware of growing resentment, especially in poor rural regions, China has now launched a nationwide inspection of all schools to stop widespread overcharging of fees. It is commonplace for parents to be charged for anything from tuition, books, desk space, electricity and heating, even to rubbish disposal.

The government is alarmed at the large number of children, especially girls, in poor rural areas who have dropped out of school because of illegal fees charged by a rundown rural education system. The inspection of fees in primary and middle schools will "protect social stability," the *People's Daily* said last month.

While China has become much richer over the past decade, government spending has slowly declined as a proportion of gross national product to just 2.46 per cent in 1995, well below the target of 4 per cent. And not all that money ends up where it should; the State Education Commission earlier this year accused officials of diverting money to "the construction of auditoriums, amusement halls, [and] hotels". Last June, according to the National People's Congress, unpaid teachers' salaries amounted to 290 million yuan (£23.2m).

By law, children should have at least nine years' education in China, but in rural areas this is rarely the reality. Kang is now a very short and thin 13-year-old. He has only one set of clothes - a dirty jacket, frayed trousers, and an old waistcoat with broken buttons. He must go the whole winter without washing, because there is only the freezing river. But in one important respect, Kang's life has taken a big step in the right direction: he now goes to a proper school.

> Parents are charged for tuition, books, desk space, heating, even rubbish disposal

Since it opened last year, Kang has attended the charity-aided Pinghu Hope School in Chenguan township, just five miles from his home in the impoverished north of Shaanxi province. This is part of Project Hope, a state-backed charity set up in 1989 to get drop-outs back to school, especially in the countryside. Project Hope has opened more than 2,500 rural schools mostly in north-west and south-west China, and claims to have returned 1.25 million children to the classroom.

The three-storey Pinghu school was sponsored by a township in Shenzhen, the booming southern region next to Hong Kong. It put in 300,000 yuan (£24,000), and the Ansai county government provided double that amount. Now the school has almost 1,000 pupils between seven and thirteen years old, two-thirds of them from local peasant villages.

Gao Qi, a teacher, said: "In the past, before this school, some children only finished grade three or four, and then dropped out."

The headteacher, Yang Ting, 39, added: "It is because parents do not think that education is very important. And because of poverty, so the kids just help the parents working in the household or field instead of going to school."

The Hope schools, one likes to assume, are the least likely to be ripping off their students by charging extra fees. The official rate at Pinghu is 28 yuan (£2) per term for tuition, and about 40 yuan (£3) a year for textbooks. But even this apparently low level of charges is not negligible in an area where, according to the headmaster, annual per capita income is just 800 yuan (£64). In this very poor area of China, Pinghu school still relies on parents to provide one-third of the annual budget through their fees. Young Kang said that his parents still found it "difficult" to pay.

Nor has Pinghu escaped financial constraints. There are at least 60 children per class, and the teachers all have to share one workroom. The headmaster groaned: "We don't have enough classrooms, and if we employ more teachers we will have financial difficulties. We can't get more money from the county government."

Young Kang, however, is one satisfied customer who now has a goal which would have been unthinkable 18 months ago. "My family will try their best to send me to middle school," he boasted.

Bosnia risks foreign-aid drought

Reuters — Bosnia's ethnic communities will receive only a trickle of foreign aid to help rebuild their shattered country unless they start complying with the terms of the Dayton peace treaty, British officials said yesterday.

The officials, speaking the day before the start of a London conference, to be attended by foreign ministers and aid agency representatives, to take stock of the year-old Bosnian peace process, said the nation's Serb Republic and the Muslim-Croat Federation were badly behind the schedule agreed at Dayton a year ago.

"Those [Bosnian] entities that do not follow those requirements will find themselves at a disadvantage when it comes to other areas of implementation," an official said.

The various sides were hampering freedom of movement, the officials added, preventing refugees from returning home, committing human rights abuses, refusing to hand over war criminals and not complying with arms-control reductions.

Scrutiny is the best recipe for avoiding food scares

There's nothing like a little tamper with nature to set the public panicking. From the Bible to Shakespeare, from Jehovah's Witnesses to organic food enthusiasts, our history and culture drip with the notion that the natural order knows best. Myths of nature's vengeance run deep. The rot began in Hamlet's Denmark because Ham's mum upturned the royal and family order. Prometheus endured the wrath of Zeus because he dared disrupt the human and godly order by stealing fire for human use. Throughout our history and mythology, human beings have been punished when they arrogantly overstepped the line to organise the world for their own convenience.

So-called modern diseases such as repetitive strain injury and chronic fatigue syndrome are explained away as the self-inflicted consequences of our hectic lifestyle. Cancers are attributed to everything from nuclear power to pesticides, but always to man-made, "unnatural" phenomena. When the focus is food, we become even more emotional. After all, (apart, perhaps, from sex) nothing is more central to our culture than eating and to our most important social rituals. The idea that we can be poisoned by performing one of the most basic and simply pleasurable of animal acts confuses us deeply. So, most recently, the BSE disaster has lent support to the "nature-is-sacred" point of view. After all, BSE might never have spread had bovine herbivores not been forced to become cannibalistic carnivores.

No wonder then that the prospect of genetically engineered food raises such suspicion. Here we go tampering again. Already we find that genetically engineered maize fed to cows could jeopardise the safety of our beef. What further dark forces will we unleash if we meddle with DNA?

The problem is, we cannot blame science for food health scares – we can only blame ourselves. The problem lies not in our science, but with our lifestyle and our public institutions. Yet twisting and tweaking the genes of the supermarket tomatoes should be no more controversial than any other form of scientific research. Like any other product – a new medicine, a pesticide, a new sweetener – these genetic vegetables should undergo strict and rigorous testing. However, if the research delivers something that works, such as cheap but tasty tomatoes available all year round, then we should welcome it with enthusiasm. Scientific progress has brought us cheap food of countless varieties, widening our choice and helping many of us live healthier and more interesting lives. The fact that meat and vegetables are intensively farmed is exactly what makes them affordable, and allows many busy people on tight budgets to maintain a balanced diet, and allows less well-off people to spend more of their money on other things.

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But that doesn't mean we don't have a genuine and growing food problem. We do. Food poisoning cases are on the increase; from 63,000 in 1992 to 82,000 in 1994. Even if people are becoming more willing to report their bowel movements to public health officials these days, this is a significant increase.

Who or what is the real culprit for our bubbling gastric troubles? One factor is our changing expectations. Most cases of food poisoning are still a result of easily avoidable mistakes in the kitchen: using the same knives for cooked and uncooked food, not cooking food for long enough, reheating food that should really be thrown away. The mistakes we make in our own kitchens poison only ourselves and our families and rarely get reported.

But these days we eat out far more often, trusting our stomachs to the hygiene of hard-pressed cooks in low-paid, low-profit industries. When that Indian restaurant reheats the madras, when the pizza chef slams the cooked marguerita down next to the uncooked chicken, when cooks in a hurry cut corners, customers pay the price in a night's lost sleep or a few days' miserable discomfort. The same is true in institutions, including schools and colleges: low-paid kitchen staff heat cook-chill lunches against the clock. In the circumstances, it would be a wonder if children didn't get food poisoning occasionally.

For most of us, food poisoning is little more than a minor inconvenience. The risks of chomping our way to severe gastric trouble remain small. *E coli*, the bacteria that has killed several people in Lanarkshire, remains rare. Nevertheless, for the young and the elderly food poisoning can be fatal. If we wish to improve public monitoring, and to prevent our food problems growing even worse than they already are, we must insist on more alert scrutiny by trading officers and health officials.

Perhaps most important, however, we should take government responsibility for food out of the hands of the producers. We can't even start to improve the food we eat in our own kitchens if we aren't given full information by a government acting in our interests. Unfortunately the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food still operates in the interests of the farmers and the food producers rather than consumers. We all remember Cordelia Gummer – daughter of the agriculture minister, not the health minister – wolfing down hamburgers to defuse the rumours about BSE. When Edwina Currie as health minister spoke out about salmonella in eggs, the Maff brayed for blood – and they got it. Salmonella cases went on rising even after Edwina was sacked.

Poisoned food in Britain is not the crisis it sometimes seems. For most of us, the advances in convenience and access outweigh the dangers. We are certainly not the prey of a ruthless scientific-corporate establishment, ruining our food in pursuit of profit. Nor are most of us ever at risk of contracting anything worse than a gippy tummy. But our public health is certainly worse than it need be, thanks to carelessness, ignorance and an inappropriate system of supervision.

Let livers set the office party limit

Why do we need to reinvent old rituals? One is the bacchanalian madness otherwise known as the annual office party. But if employee libido runs as free as the red wine at Christmas, should employers get excited, too? It's a danger zone, says Trish Embley, an employment law specialist. Managers, she says, should stop things getting out of hand. But isn't that the whole point? To be indecorous, out of order and generally wicked? As long as no windows or laws get broken, propriety, lust and livers should be left to look after themselves. For once, it's none of the bosses' business.

• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Real 'pro-life' agenda more than abortion

Sir: If there is to be a major debate here on "pro-life" issues, I hope it will include a decent definition of what "pro-life" actually means.

It often means merely opposition to abortion and euthanasia, but "pro-life" must include campaigning for disabled people's rights and opposition to the death penalty. How can we expect people to value the humanity of the unborn if we are not prepared to respect the value of the born, no matter what they have done?

The "pro-life" agenda must also value single mothers. Why should women be penalised for making the brave decision to keep the child? With both pro- and anti-abortion surveys in the United States showing that lack of support from the father is the primary reason for having an abortion, should not pro-life campaigners promote increased male responsibility?

Then perhaps it will be possible to reduce the abortion rate even without reform of the Abortion Act.

IMOGEN CATERER
Gloucester

Sir: "Abortion politics sweep into Britain" (report, 30 November). And about time. About time we had an open debate about the whole business.

The Birth Control Trust think the sight of an abortion is "gruesome". They are right. Killing another human being is always a horrible thing. Of course the pro-choice lobby want it all kept safely out of sight. Does that make it all right? Does keeping abortion out of politics, as the Prime Minister wants, make it right?

We are living in a survival-of-the-fittest society – a culture that increasingly claims it is legitimate to pick off the weak and the inconvenient. In Nazi Germany, psychiatric patients were considered inconvenient, and thousands were put to death. It was done legally, it was done behind closed doors and it was done with the connivance of the medical profession. Now it is the unwanted child that is "inconvenient". So 170,000 a year are put to death. It is done legally, it is done behind closed doors and it is done by the medical profession.

What next? Legalised euthanasia for the expensive and troublesome elderly? What will future generations say about us?

HUGH J THOMSON
Consultant surgeon
Birmingham

Sir: The last British national abortion survey conducted by MORI in 1995 asked whether voters agreed or disagreed with the principle of "abortion on request", which goes beyond what is permitted under the present Abortion Act. Sixty-six per cent strongly agreed with this or tended to agree with this. Twenty-four per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.

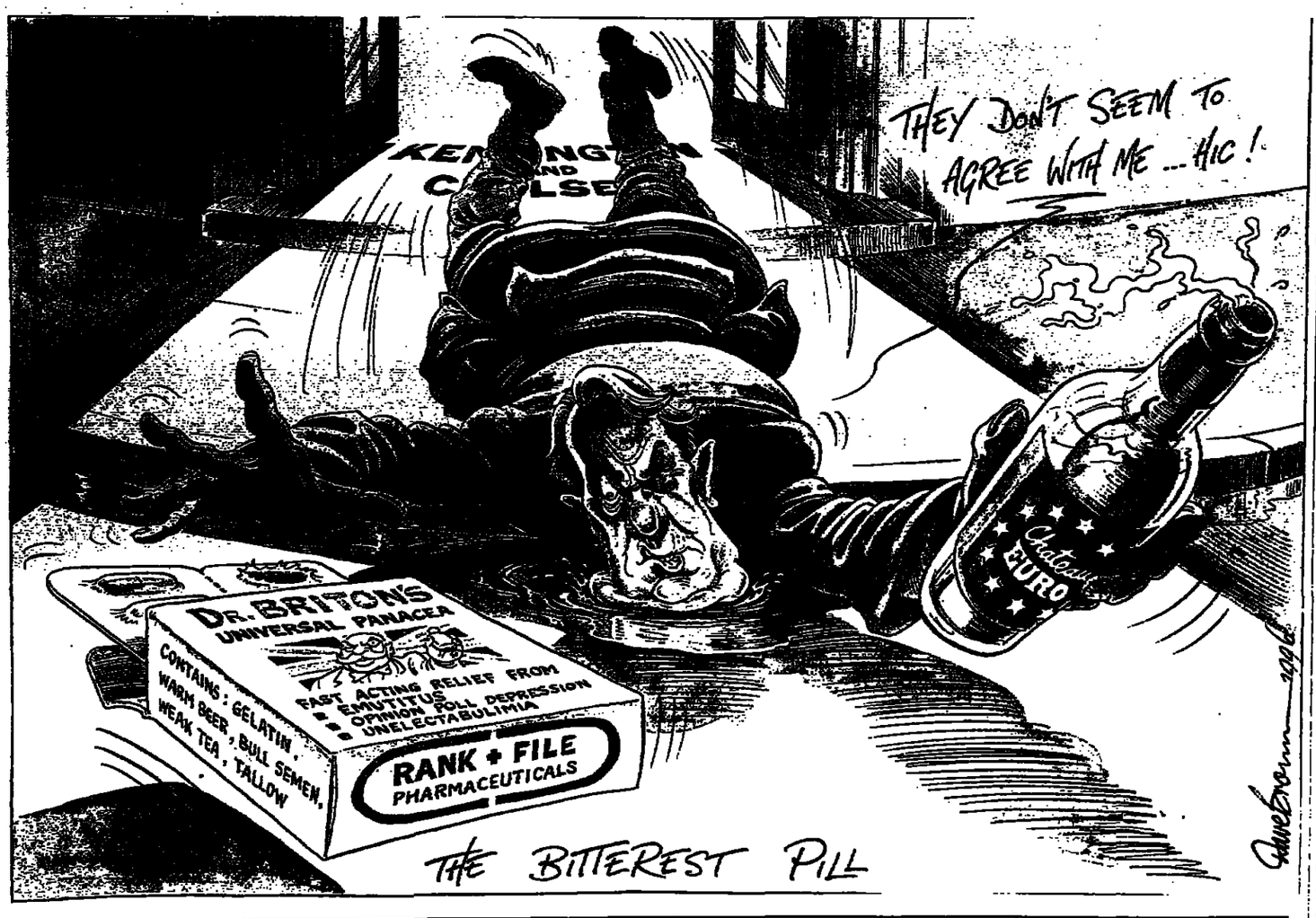
The Prolife Alliance, which is apparently to put up candidates at the next election, will draw its votes from the 15 per cent that declared they "strongly" disagreed with abortion on request of the pregnant woman. Most even of these religious extremists will prefer not to vote on a purely fundamentalist platform, however, since they have views on taxation, Europe and other subjects.

Since I believe that compelling women to have unwanted babies is both socially undesirable and morally evil, I very much hope this religious faction will put up candidates and that this is not just one of their usual publicity stunts. This will demonstrate once and for all that their actual capacity to attract votes even in favourable constituencies will amount to maybe 3 per cent of all those voting, thus placing them firmly in the lunatic fringe of electoral contenders.

MADELEINE SIMMS
London NW11

Sir: It would seem logical that those who oppose abortion should wish to obviate abortions by actively promoting contraception. Why don't they?

R CLATWORTHY
Beverley, East Yorkshire



Rise in birth rate not the answer

Sir: D R Smith raises the question of future population increase (letter, 2 December) and suggests that an increase in the birth rate "could be considered desirable to counter the ageing population".

In fact it seems unlikely that there is any such problem of an ageing population. Given the increasing tendency towards forced early retirement, and endemic high unemployment, it is clear that whatever the restraints on our ability to provide for an increasing number of elderly may be, a shortage in the working-age groups is not one.

Even if it were, to advocate increasing the birth rate would require the same false logic as that behind such scams as pyramid selling and chain letters. Not only would it increase the number of dependent members of the population in the short term, but in the long term would mean a larger retired population, as the new generation in turn grows old.

The increase in the number of households is being caused at least as much by fragmentation of families as the increasing population. On the other hand, as Mr Smith points out, the population is still increasing, but few could share his view that the predicted increase of 2.1 million deserves the epithet "only".

Like it or not, we are now facing harsh dilemmas because our population has grown so high relative to our natural resources. Is it not time that population became an important subject of national debate, and one which all political parties should address?

CHRISTOPHER PADLEY
Green Party Population Policy Working Group
Market Rasen,
Lincolnshire

Too many eggs in the tunnel

Sir: Richard Hope writes (letter, 2 December) that it is "laughable" to argue that airlines could not switch capacity to meet demand should the Channel Tunnel be put out of action.

I have before me forecasts, published by Eurotunnel, of passenger rail traffic through the tunnel in the year 2040, with and without the high-speed link. Without the link, through rail services alone are expected to carry 22.5 million passengers a year, and with it 45 million.

Last year, international traffic through Heathrow was 44 million passengers. The question posed by the proposed high-speed link is: how many eggs should be placed in one basket?

JOHN ADAMS
Geography Department
University College London
London WC1

All correct on origins of kilt

Sir: Both your correspondents James Fraser Wild (letter, 28 November) and Fulton Gillespie (2 December) are correct about the origins of the Scottish kilt.

The ancient "quelt" was indeed a rather short, indiscreet and cumbersome outfit. For this reason the Lancastrian Quaker, Thomas Rawlinson, who employed many Scots producing charcoal for his iron forges, had the military tailor at the Inverness barracks "abridge the dress and make it handy and convenient for his workmen". What the tailor came up with was the "felie beg" or "philibeg", the modern day knee-length skirt and separate plaid combination (as described by Hugh Trevor-Roper in *The Invention of Tradition*).

Yet despite this heritage I have to confess to a little pride in my own roots, for certainly in Glasgow the modern-day young Scot seems to favour the clans Armani, Versace and Dolce e Gabbana.

JOSEPH FATTORINI
Glasgow

Sir: Rawlinson's contribution was achieved by cutting in two the long and heavy woolcloth which till then was used in the manner described by the "Gentleman in the North of Scotland".

The long woolcloth would be prepared for use on the ground: the folds then were not stitched, and the owner would, apparently, roll in it. Not a very practical way to dress, but one should remember that this same woolcloth, when needed, would be unfolded and used as a blanket.

R MARANIELLO
London NW11

Whom can we taxpayers sue?

Sir: I have every sympathy with any child who is the victim of incompetent teaching and wonder why no one has thought of suing negligent teachers before now (report, 2 December). But from the purely selfish point of view of a taxpayer, I am just a bit concerned that I appear to be funding every stage of this process.

First, I pay for the child's education, whatever the standard. That includes the school buildings, the teachers, the cleaners and the whole education bureaucracy. Then I pay the solicitors and barristers to sue the school, and the judges and court officers who try the case. In the meantime, I pay a sixth-form college to repair the damage done by the original school, and finally, if the court case is successful, I pay any damages awarded against the education authority.

Could someone please tell me whom I can sue for creating this ridiculous state of affairs?

M H LIGHTFOOT
Northallerton,
North Yorkshire

Sir: Now that pupils are to sue their former school for their being educationally disadvantaged (report, 2 December), I presume it will be in order for teachers and pupils to sue disruptive members of the school who make study, progress and life impossible for everybody else.

BERNARD O'CONNOR
Dundee

Poet justice

Sir: Your correspondent Roy Watkins (letters, 30 November), in the course of chiding teachers for their ignorance of grammar, mangles and misapplies his quotation from Philip Larkin's *Church Going*. When Larkin wrote that "someone will forever be surprising/A hunger in himself to be more serious", he was thinking of more important matters than the ability to recognise modal verbs.

DAVID REED
Bristol

How to save the Reading Room

Sir: I was very sad to read ("The final chapter for library classic", 30 November) that Camden planning committee has given permission for the conversion of the British Museum Reading Room from its proper use into a computer café.

My respect and admiration for this great national institution go back 50 years to when I started work from school as a ticket issuer for the Reading Room, and where, as your correspondent recalls, I met my partner, Angus Wilson, who contributed so much to the work and life of visiting scholars from all over the world.

The Reading Room is indeed one of the wonders of the world: a superbly purpose-built room for study, as I can testify, having used it as a reader.

What should happen, and could happen if this Government had an ounce of respect for our heritage, is that the Reading Room should be dismantled and re-erected alongside the new British Library at St Pancras, where its rightful function could continue, and where the second largest dome in London could be seen: it is not seen now unless you climb to the roof of the Museum Tavern.

There is land available, unless the Government has sold it to the private sector – something it is compulsively impelled to do. The space left at the British Museum site would be invaluable to the departments remaining.

TONY GARRETT
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

Set fixed terms between elections

Sir: What a relief an election sooner than May, when this Parliament's time runs out, would be to all concerned, you say in your leader of 2 December. And so, doubtless, it would be.

Nevertheless, the prerogative of prime ministers to call an early election is open to question.

Not only are they quite powerful enough without it, but the right to manipulate the election date confers on the governing party an unfair electoral advantage and the ensuing uncertainty can be highly damaging economically.

If other countries get by quite happily with fixed-term (typically four-year) parliaments elected on predetermined dates, why can't we?

WALTER GREY
London N3

Bed to verse

Sir: Phil Hammond MD (3 December) quotes the opening lines of the children's classic "Miss Polly had a Dolly" as an example of inappropriate behaviour on the part of patients.

Tellingly, he omits the other verses. The second – "The Doctor came with his bag and hat, and he knocked on the door with a rat-a-tat-tat" – contains a blackly satirical suggestion that the doctor might come promptly.

The third – "He looked at the dolly and he shook his head, and he said 'Miss Polly put her straight to bed' " – has the swiftly drawn portrait of a condescending bedside manner.

And the fourth – "He wrote on the paper for a pill pill pill, and he said 'I'll be back with my bill bill bill' " – leaves us in no doubt as to where the doctor's priorities lie.

JULIAN CONNERTY
London N6

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk).
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

essay

A Lordly plot to save their place

Viscount Cranborne, Leader of the House of Lords whose lineage goes back to the time of Elizabeth I, is not going to let New Labour take away his hereditary rights without a fight

By Paul Vallely and John Rentoul

The Cecil dynasty (clockwise from above): Lord Burghley, Elizabeth I's adviser; Robert Cecil, Lord Treasurer and the first Earl of Salisbury; Bobbetty, the fifth Marquess of Salisbury, who resigned from two cabinets (photographs: Hulton Getty); and the present Viscount Cranborne, who displays all the political sophistication of his ancestors

House of Lords

As at 19 October	Life Peers	Hereditary Peers
Conservative	142	318
Labour	96	15
Liberal Democrats	32	24
Cross bench	118	201
Others	21	68

Behind the scenes the provisional wing of the House of Lords has begun to make its preparations. Paramilitary hereditary peers have begun piecing together a sequence of parliamentary plots to block Tony Blair's plan to begin a reform of the unelected chamber of the British parliament if Labour wins the forthcoming general election. Anonymous Tory peers have been reported this week threatening to "amend out of existence" Labour's two-clause Bill to take away the voting rights of hereditary peers.

Speculation centres on the person of Baron Cecil of Essendon. To students of history it will come as no surprise. The noble lord is a Cecil and therefore a member of the most distinguished dynasty in 400 years of British politics. His ancestor William Cecil, a Tudor lawyer, became the closest adviser to Queen Elizabeth I and was created Lord Burghley in gratitude. His son, Robert, succeeded to the post and continued as first minister to James I. Later Cecils included the last of the great Victorian prime ministers, Lord Salisbury. Prime Minister A J Balfour was a relative. And a subsequent Lord Salisbury became the kingmaker in the "magic circle" which used to choose the Tory leader.

Small wonder there was much mockery about John Major's vaunted classless society when four years ago the present Robert Cecil – a former Tory MP who is heir to the Marquess of Salisbury and therefore known by the courtesy title of Viscount Cranborne – was catapulted into the Lords by an arcane "writ of acceleration" to join John Major's government. This event was a joyful anachronism for Tory snobs and pundits of the high Tory historical-mysticism bent. There was much talk of scions of a noble dynasty and a man who carried in his genes the accumulated political skills of the Cecils.

It is a poetic flummery which Cranborne is happy to exploit even in the midst of the latest political intrigue. Today he gives a lecture to the floridly-named right-wing think tank, Politeia. Being a Cecil he is not afraid of the broad historical sweep. "Western Europe, whose culture has dominated the planet for over three centuries, is in danger of going the way of the Caliph, the Moghul and the Ming, and for very similar reasons," he declares in the pamphlet on which the lecture is based.

He is worried about nation states being swallowed up in large flabby supranational groupings that will sap the vital desire to compete on which Western civilisation is based. As with economics, so with constitutions. He believes that the British constitution has evolved by adapting to continuous competing pressures. He therefore rejects Labour's plans for the Lords, on the grounds that written constitutions are bound to be imperfect because they are based on so-called fundamental principles:

"Man is not a perfectible beast," he muses. "Therefore, how can a declaration of first principles itself be the embodiment of perfection – unless it has been drafted by God and not man? If the first principles are faulty, then the mechanical arrangements will be even faultier." Politics, he declares "is not just about rationality, because man is not a wholly rational animal." This is, of course, the essential standpoint of any defender of the hereditary principle.

But there is not in that much of a hint of the parliamentary guerrilla warfare to come. Cranborne is too urbane for that. Publicly he stands by the promise made by Lord Strathclyde, the Conservative chief whip in the House of Lords, who said last month that his party would not block the ending of speaking and voting rights for hereditary peers.

In a letter to Lord Carter, a senior Labour frontbencher, Strathclyde insisted that the Tories would abide by the "Salisbury Convention" – invented by a previous Robert Cecil, Cranborne's grandfather, when he was Tory leader of the Lords during the first Labour government in 1945. This insists the unelected chamber would not stand in the way of a manifesto pledge of a party which had won a general election. "It would be constitutionally wrong for this House to oppose proposals which have been definitely put before the electorate," grandpapa said.

Privately the plotters are planning a detailed campaign of constitutional ambushes to paralyse the first year of a Blair administration. "The Leader of the House cannot possibly sanction people planning that kind of thing," said a Tory party source but others in the House are convinced that Lord Cranborne will turn a benignly-unfocused eye to a group of die-hard Tory "provos" in the guerrilla warfare ahead.

Expect trouble of a protracted, procedural kind from the likes of Baron Denham, the former Tory chief whip in the Lords, a passionate defender of the hereditary system. Then there is the Earl of Onslow, who has already expounded the clever country-house Tory argument that the hereditaries should go, but not to be replaced by a fully-appointed super-quango. And trouble may come too from Lord Mowbray and Stourton, another ex-whip, who possesses England's oldest (13th century) barony.

The Cecils, with their curious mixture of high principle and low tactics, are well-versed in this kind of thing. Their tradition is one of high Toryism, far more concerned with the eternal verities of Church and Crown than transient political fashions. When the two clash the Cecils have a habit of resigning. Cranborne's great-great-grandfather resigned from Disraeli's Cabinet over the second reform bill. His grandfather, Bobbetty Salisbury, resigned twice – under Chamberlain over appeasement and under Macmillan over "coloured" immigration.

But they are cunning tacticians too. Lord Burghley, for 30 years Elizabeth I's most trusted adviser, though a generally moderate man was responsible for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots and was one of England's first propagandists, financing scholars to rewrite pre-Reformation English history from a Protestant perspective. His son, who was made the first Viscount Cranborne in 1604, successfully masterminded the transition from the Tudor to the Stuart monarchies following a policy which was anti-Catholic, anti-Spanish and anti-Puritan simultaneously.

The present Cranborne is a highly sophisticated political animal too. After a career as a banker in San Francisco and London he was elected to the Commons the same year as John Major. But on being promoted from the back benches to the first rung of Government he resigned within days in protest at the Anglo-Irish agreement. (Cranborne is a strong Unionist). Margaret Thatcher never forgave him. Yet, some years later later, despite his mildly heretical views about government policy, he was sent prematurely to the Lords by John Major to become a junior defence minister. He later became Leader in the Lords, where he successfully sorted out the mess left behind by the departing Lord Wakeham, who had presided over a series of humiliating government defeats and reversals. From there he masterminded Major's campaign to be re-elected as party leader in 1995.

His writ of acceleration was not uncontroversial. "It brings both houses into disrepute," said Labour's then spokesman on constitutional matters, Graham Allen MP. Cranborne shrugged such criticism off – as he did the tabloid outrage when he received the largest rise in a Cabinet pay-round at a time when nurses pay was being held down and, they pointed out, he stood to inherit £105m.

Imperviousness to popular indignation is, of course, an aristocratic trait. Cranborne is the man who in his younger days, after a good lunch at the Turf Club, put up for membership the Rhodesian Foreign Minister PK Van Der Byl, a racist Boer who had labelled all blacks "savages". And when as an MP he won the lottery to introduce a Private Member's Bill he proposed the reintroduction of the old university seats which had been abolished in 1945.

So, few on the Labour side fail to read between the lines when Cranborne's advisers say that progress in a Labour Bill to remove the rights of hereditary peers "would be slow – everything must go through its full stages".

One Tory peer laughs out loud when it is suggested that Labour would like to get a Referendum Bill through in time to hold referendums in Scotland and Wales by September next year. "Everything is done by agreement in this House. There would have to be a compromise. And we have minimum intervals set out in Standing Order 44 – and there would have to be a vote to suspend it," he says gleefully.

Then there will be all the amendments to consider. There is "an endless permutation" of possibilities, says one Tory. A gloomy Labour official sets out likely Tory lines of attack. "They could do all the sorts of things that we do, you know, inserting requirements for 'consultation and evaluation'." Labour used this device themselves to defeat the Government over nursery vouchers earlier this year.

It is not as if the Tories have behaved with utter propriety in the past. In the 1970s, the Tories in the Lords ditched two of the Labour government's Bills (on trade union law and nationalising the aircraft and shipbuilding industries). And despite the Salisbury Convention, the 1974-79 Labour government was defeated 343 times in the Lords. Over the whole period since 1979, the Tory government has only been defeated 231 times.

Labour strategists are now in a huddle as to how all this might be countered or pre-empted. Lord Richard, leader of the Labour peers, wants to give top priority to a Bill to remove the rights of hereditary peers. But other senior Labour figures argue that the Bill to set up referendums on devolution in Scotland and Wales ought to be pushed through first.

There is one Cecil precedent that no one expects Cranborne to respect. "It is the duty of every Englishman, and of every English party," said his great-great-grandfather, the last of the great Victorian prime ministers, "to accept a political defeat cordially." If Labour does win the election they can expect no such magnanimity from the latest Robert Cecil.

Lord Richard has told friends that if the Tory hereditaries indulge in obvious time-wasting and obstruction of the Bill to abolish their rights, it might be worth calling another general election – on the issue of Lords reform. It is not a threat he is likely to carry out, but it says something about Labour's estimation of the calibre of Lord Cranborne's generalship in the coming battle that he is prepared to go so far as to issue it.

All human life at Pork Scratchings

Miles Kington

As I am always looking for ways of making a quick fortune, I have been working recently on an idea for a new TV sitcom.

Hasn't everyone? I hear you cry. Yes, but this one should hit the jackpot, as it is set in a place that everyone knows and where every section of society meets, and yet which has never ever been the setting for drama.

Where else but – the motorway service area!

Here is an extract from the opening episode of what I hope will be my long-awaited smash hit TV comedy: *Welcome to Pork Scratchings...*

The scene is in the offices on the Northbound side of the Pork Scratchings Service Area on the M99. The manager, Mr Stainley, has sent for Judy, the manageress of Lucy's Larder, the health food part of the service area, to introduce her to her new recruit, Toby.

Mr Stainley: Ah, Judy. How's everything in Lucy's Larder?
Judy: Fresh. Organic. Tasty. Fabulous.
Stainley: Is it really?
Judy: No. But that's what we tell people.
Stainley: Good, good! Now, Judy, this is our new recruit, Toby. He's replacing Willy. Can you show him the ropes?
Toby: Sir? Mr Stainley?
Stainley: Yes, Toby?
Toby: Can I ask you a question?
Stainley: Of course, lad! Intelligence is what we look for in employees at the Pork Scratchings Service Area! We never find it, but that's what we look for!
Toby: Well, Mr Stainley, what happened to Willy my predecessor? Why did he leave?
Stainley: He got food poisoning.
Toby: Food poisoning? Here?
Stainley: Yes, I'm afraid so. He bought a burger from the southbound side burger bar. I had warned him never to venture over the other side, but he wouldn't listen. Now Judy ...
Judy: Yes, sir ?
Stainley *(in an urgent whisper)*: Oh, Judy, when can I take you out for a date again?
Judy: Never, after what happened last time. I still can't believe that your idea of a night out was to drive me 200 miles up the M, give me an all-day breakfast at Charnock Richard and drive me all the way back again!
Cue for cackling audience laughter. Cut to the shop on the northbound side, where the till is being manned by bossy, camp comic character Herbert. A customer enters the shop.
Customer: Excuse me, I don't know if you can help me ...
Herbert: Well, I can in principle, but it depends on the small print of your request.
Customer: Pardon?
Herbert: I mean, what do you want?
Customer: Oh. Well, I'm trying to use the phone out there to phone home and tell my wife I'm late, but it's so close to the video games arcade that I can't hear a word my wife is saying. **Herbert:** I think you'll find she's saying: "What's that horrible noise in the background ? I can't hear a word you're saying!"
Customer: So there are no other phones in a quieter place?
Herbert: No. Telephones are only ever put in two places at service areas. One is outside where it's so cold or so wet that people don't make long calls and form queues. The other is inside by the video game section, where it's so noisy that people don't make long calls and form queues.
Customer: So what's the answer?
Just then, an RAC recruiting man wanders past holding a placard saying, "The End Of The World Is Nigh, So Join The RAC now!" He is talking on a mobile phone.
Herbert: There's your answer!
Customer: What – join the RAC ?
Herbert: No, you silly cow – get a mobile phone. You don't want to go joining the RAC.
Customer: Why not ?
Herbert: It would give him a heart attack.
Cut to self-service section of cafeteria, where Tracey, the cheeky serving girl, is at the breakfast counter. A lorry driver approaches with his tray.
Tracey: What do you want, sir?
Lorry driver: Full breakfast, please.
Tracey: How do you like your eggs ?
Lorry driver: I like them lightly fried two hours ago, left standing around to acquire a soft patina of dust and grease, then reheated to go slightly hard and varnished on the outside.
Tracey: You're in luck. That's the only sort we've got.
And so on, for another half-hour of relentless back-chat. Coming soon... the episode where the Gents Toilet breaks down for an hour and causes chaos, where Tracey becomes convinced that the newly arrived customer is Egon Ronay, and where someone actually joins the RAC and the RAC man does have a heart attack.

Why I should give back my widow's pension

Polly Toynbee

Barbara Castle is wrong – we don't need to spend £3bn on benefits for all

La Pensionaria is on the warpath again: Barbara Castle claims she was tricked with a bogus promise of a pensions review at the party conference. Breathing fire from her home, Hell Corner Farm, she calls the old comrades to arms in support of the National Insurance system. She is back. She is angry. And she is very wrong.

This is why. The National Insurance system is an empty relic of the sentimental old left. Most people are far richer than they were 50 years ago when Beveridge devised it so that it now pays considerable sums to people who are not needy, while failing to help the genuinely poor.

I know my situation is rare, but it does give an extreme example of what is wrong with the National Insurance system. I am entitled to £123.00 a week widowed mothers allowance, as well as £10.80 child benefit, and this week an added £10 Christmas bonus. Although taxed on it, no one asks if I need it. My late husband's contributions entitle me to it – though, like most people, he probably regarded NI contributions as just another tax. There is no need for the well-off to draw universal benefits – sickness, unemployment, child benefit or pensions.

Privately, most sensible politicians agree to let these benefits wither on the vine: Barbara Castle's plan to restore the link between pensions and earnings would strengthen universal benefits. This is a last gasp of the old guard – because when NI was set up, most of the population was relatively poor, women did not work and had husbands who did. Life has changed beyond recognition. Seventy per cent of women work and many of the old are far richer through occupational pensions. The people who are truly poor gain nothing at all from NI: those on income support – single mothers, unemployed men, the old – gain nothing; universal benefits are deducted from their social security even if they contributed all their lives. It is now time to redistribute that money.

Barbara Castle wants to add £3bn immediately to the pensions bill, paying out to all pensioners, rich and poor alike. There are many poor pensioners – but what they need is a redistribution in their favour. We could afford it if we took away NI pensions from the best off.

Think how much could be saved and used to stem the growth of the underclass. Start with child benefit (not an NI benefit, but a universal one) which costs £6bn. Once it was the only money wives could call their own. Now most women work, while poor women on income support are the only ones not to receive child benefit. There are some non-working women whose husbands don't pay enough housekeeping, but this is an expensive way to target them. Instead we could have nursery schools, child care, after-school and holiday clubs, especially for the deprived.

What of other universal benefits? Incapacity Benefit pays out £7bn, of which an estimated £1.5bn may go to those who are sick but are not poor. Some £200m could be saved from those who are unemployed but are not poor. Other sums could be saved by not giving contributory benefits to people like me.

But the big one is pensions – £30bn a year. If you were to take it from the richest 20 per cent of pensioners, that would bring in a handsome £6bn, some or all of which could be spent on the 30 per cent of pensioners on income support – robbing Margaret and Denis Thatcher to pay the rest. This is not an outrageous proposal – the National Association of Pension Funds wants just such a "rebalancing" of the growing inequality in pensioner incomes.

No politicians in their right mind would dare do this to many existing pensioners, so the money would not flow in immediately. While some benefits (mine) could be stopped at once, pension cuts would have to be phased in. Harriet Harman, Labour's shadow Social Security Secretary, plans to means test all new pensioners to trace the 1 million missing who are due at least £14 a week unclaimed income support. So while bringing the missing ones in, it would be easy to knock the top ones out.

Any tampering with entitlements will cause a great outcry. Look at the rage when Gordon Brown suggested a slight cut in child benefit. It would take bravery – but only Labour, as founders of the current social security system, could do it. The Treasury would rightly insist on still collecting contributions from both employees and employers. It seems to me perfectly fair to go on calling NI "insurance" – the system will still insure us all against genuine need. It never was insurance in the real sense. It was always a con, done with smoke, mirrors and a lot of high-flown rhetoric. There is no fund, there is no connection between what you pay in over a lifetime and what you receive: you have no rights. All is left to the whim of the government of the day.

NI was once a fine communal ideal – all paying in, all earning pensions. But I doubt whether anyone under 40 has much ideological understanding of the NI deductions on their payslips. It used to be an efficient way to reach the poor, but in a less homogeneous society universal benefits are extravagant.

A Labour government intent on tackling the causes of crime will need money for intensive extra education, parenting programmes, youth clubs, training etc. Some say it would be fairer to raise income tax. I agree. But any large sums wasted by the state should be saved, because it is all desperately needed elsewhere.

Gordon Brown will need to harvest all he can. (Defence is another budget ripe for picking, since we spend twice the EU average.) He cannot send his front-bench troops naked into the general election with only the pathetic shreds of spending promises he has given them so far. So something drastic has to be done. He might enjoy boasting that Labour had cut the social security budget in ways that Peter Lilley never dared – while still giving more generously to the poor.

We're having the wrong arguments

The European debate should be about democracy and prosperity, not sovereignty and geography, says Andrew Marr

Just another winter's tale? The fascinating story that John Major was on the verge of promising his outright opposition to British membership of the single currency in the next Parliament featured on many front pages. It was strongly-worded, convincing stuff and just what many oak-hearted, timber-brained Tory patriots had been praying for these many months. Huzzah! Poor old Ken Clarke – stuffed in time for Christmas.

Strange, then, that it was so utterly denied by Mr Major himself in the Commons yesterday. Was this merely been an example of collective wish-fulfilment by the Conservative press? Or a misguided briefing? Or a kite being flown?

It is hardly a secret that John Major would like to come out as Sterling's true defender. He has been engaging in ever more frantic private semaphore on the subject for months. Things have not yet quite reached the stage where the First Lord of the Treasury is hanging around bus-stops, hissing to bemused passers-by that he's against the single currency, or tramping down Oxford Street with a sandwich board. But he's tried almost everything else.

Most of the parliamentary party and its supporters in the country think that a strong anti-EMU line is about the only thing that could save the Conservatives at the polls. And everyone knows Major would stick with Sterling if he won the next election. The desire to speak this truth is almost uncontainable.

The only reason he hasn't gone forcefully public is the presence of that seemingly immovable object in the Treasury. A Clarke resignation would bring the Government down. So Major and his people confine themselves to private grrrs, stage whispers, nose-taps and broad winks.

Hence, I think, this week's high farce. There is a thin membrane between what "everybody knows" the position to be: and what it is officially. That membrane is bulging and – with every confident press briefing – beginning to tear. But what is obvious cannot be admitted. There are some truths so dangerous that they can only be discussed off the record.

This position is not going to help Major's hoped-for revival in the polls. None of his nodding and winking will help. It makes him seem shifty, rather than patriotic. No wonder he is irritated by Clarke, the immovable European object. No wonder the Eurosceptics accuse the Chancellor of single-handedly holding the rest of the Government hostage: bad for the party; bad for the country.

In fact, Clarke is about the only cool-headed and strategic player left. He is guarding a flank which the Tory party needs for its survival. For this debate is no longer primarily about the single currency. It has moved on with astonishing speed. In the course of this year alone – and 1996 will go down as a year of huge importance – anti-federalists have shifted the argument from EMU to the very future of Britain in the EU.

"Renegotiate" is the sophisticated battle cry; but it can be demotically translated as "get out". And on that, at least, the Tory right agrees with the continental federalists themselves, who now think London is virtually ruling itself out of a European future.

The anti-federalists are not being malign in changing the question, so much as logical. If the single currency is the lock-in mechanism for a fully federal state, with its own legal system, security structures, police force and government, and perhaps eventually with its own language too (almost certainly, strangely enough, that would be English), then it is the whole project, not simply the lock, that needs to be argued about.

So what, in these circumstances, should decent, patriotic but pro-European politicians do? The first thing is, create time and space for serious thought about the options facing us. That requires a far harder look at the Europe of the future than before.

It would not be a bad idea for Britain to be outside a highly-regulated, centralised, undemocratic and unstable Germanic superstate. But it would be a very bad idea for us to cut our political links with a decentralised, free-trading and tolerably loose union of European nations – our nearest trading block, the part of the world whose politics have always affected ours and, not least, our cousins in history.

Conservative right-wingers are crusading on the basis of parliamentary sovereignty and geography. The political centre has always known that the more sensible arguments revolve around democracy and prosperity. These are not easy. They may not even be resolvable. Could a single currency be arranged in a way that allowed different fiscal policies? Can a Euro-parliament, with massive constituencies and virtually no press coverage, put down roots among the people?

But these are the arguments worth having. They are about Europe now, a place where many borders have virtually disappeared, where the middle classes, at least, feel at home in different countries and where most governments are pursuing roughly similar policies, not because of bureaucratic coercion, but because they inhabit the same mental world, with similar constraints and dilemmas.

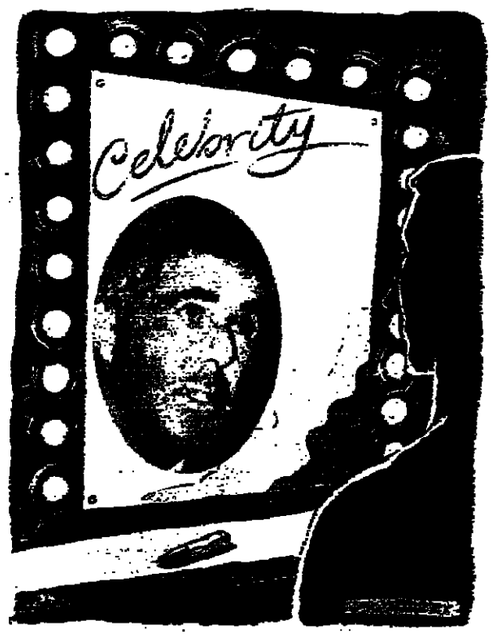
If we really want to break from that, then there will be penalties as well as the undoubted benefit of living our lives under the absolute power of the likes of Michael Howard, Michael Portillo, Bill Cash and Dame Olga Maitland. We will be unable to influence any shift towards a more hostile trading and business climate on the continent. We will endlessly be affected by rules and decisions that our politicians learn about in their morning newspapers.

These are choices worth keeping open and discussing. Yet, in its headlong rush to wrap itself in the Union Jack, the Conservative leadership, spurred on by the keyboard Wellingtons in the media, has been trying closing them off.

For the party of business and of pragmatism, this is astonishing. Mr Major probably thinks that if he wins the election, he can steer the Tories back to a pragmatic, mild pro-Europeanism. But since he has been running before the wind (an offshore Nor'westerly) since 1992, why should anyone believe he could change direction after 1997?

Clarke may look politically weak – isolated in his party, unpopular with his natural supporters in the press. But in fighting to keep Britain's options open, and in recognising the dangers of the anti-European ratchet, he is doing his party a great service. And, unlike so many of his self-censoring cabinet colleagues, he has one great advantage. He can say, quite openly, what he thinks.

Why they buy the Max factor



He works in the world of mirrors and smoke, where fact and fiction are adapted to suit. His name, Max Clifford, celebrity PR. He talks to Peter Popham about the lying game

The stage is ablaze with lights. All eyes are on ——, the legendary, the one and only, the big, big star who fills the house night after night, who makes us all laugh and cry and sends us home happy.

Because of the intensity of the light, there is an area in front of the stage that is deeply, softly, all-absorbingly black. We can think of that darkness, that proximity, as a good metaphor for the world of public relations.

Who shapes and controls what we know of ——'s personal life? Who has dictated which *interviews* she gives, and under what conditions? Who knows every dirty little secret that could backfire on her and has moved heaven and earth to keep them secret – and whose expensive services are for that reason alone indispensable? The murky figure clad in velvety black in the shadow of the stage, that's who: the celebrity public relations advisor.

Most people in the industry believe that they work best when they are out of sight. Fortunately there is an exception to this rule, one man who doesn't mind letting his tongue wag and getting his picture splashed about, with the result that he is a considerable celebrity in his own right. Max Clifford is glad to be interviewed, and lays down only a few restrictions on what may be quoted. But while banishing the darkness and mystery with one hand, Max instantly readmits it with the other. Because – and he's repeated it so often that he's got to be sincere – Max tells lies.

Example, the famous one: Freddie Starr never did eat that hamster. It was just a good line.

Example, equally famous though hypothetical: American star comes to Britain, Max knows he's gay, the world at large fondly believes him to be straight; so Max ensures there is a glamorous actress on hand to steer him around, looking besotted.

The first is a plain lie, the second a cunning deception. Max is a master of both. The problem this frank acknowledgment creates is that it scrambles the ground rules.

On entering his dingy, poky top-floor office above a hair salon on London's New Bond Street, one's eye is arrested by a framed front cover of the *Daily Mirror*, bearing the headline JAGGER AND JERRY SPLIT. Aha: Clifford must have been the one who told Jerry to go and see Diana's divorce lawyer, then spill the beans. Max, however, denies this flatly. Look closer, he says: there on the same page is a picture of himself with Antonia de Sancha, the woman who helped to finish David Mellor's ministerial career.

So Max has nothing to do with Jerry Hall. But if he did have, what is the likelihood he would admit it? Where in this hall of mirrors does reality start?

"I'm not looking to try and baffle you," Max says in a kindly tone when we are settled in his cosy back room on the diminutive three-piece. Seventies retro without the chic.

"You ask me anything and you'll get it exactly as it is. If there's a mystery, I'll tell you there's *a mystery*, and I'll explain why it's a mystery." That's reassuring – until he adds, "but I won't explain the details of it because then it's no longer a mystery".

So how does Clifford go about preventing unhelpful information about a client reaching the media? Others in the business talk about pleading, threatening, bargaining to keep negative stories as low key as possible. Max Clifford's approach, however, is proactive. "I normally have three or four or five major things up my sleeve ready to break. So, if I get a sudden call saying so and so has been caught out and is about to be so and so'd by such and such a paper, I would get hold of the editor as quickly as possible and say 'right, I can give you this instead'. I don't mean to say it's going to work – I've got to come up with something that's an even bigger splash, haven't I." Pause for dramatic effect. "Pamela Bordes was a cover for a much bigger story."

The even more dramatic approach – again a trademark Clifford strategy – is to stop the story before it starts. Max gives a vivid illustration of this, spoiled halfway through for me when I remembered I was in the company of a self-confessed liar.

"I'll give you another hypothetical situation, though this actually happened to me. I had a client who was a major star, married. The wife had said, 'If you ever stray again it's finished'. We'd been doing a television interview at his house, the wife was meant to be away, I was downstairs, he was upstairs, 'entertaining' in the bedroom. I saw the wife's car pulling up – she was almost getting out of the car as it pulled up.

"I rushed upstairs, and by the time I'd got to the top of the stairs I'd virtually taken all of my clothes off; by the time I'd got into the bedroom I was stark bollock naked. I pushed him into the wardrobe, and I then jumped into bed and seemed to be having sex with the woman in it when the wife burst through the door catching me in bed. Now that saved him £50 million for a certainty.

"The wife chased me out of the house, called me a disgusting pervert for using her bed, how dare I, and she was very upset that the star continued to employ me – he said Max knows too much about me, could be dangerous. That man is still my client to this day. So that's public relations to me."

Max Clifford is nostalgic for the way things were in Britain 20 or 30 years ago, "when people cared about people, it was far friendlier, far safer, and people could go out and leave their doors open".

Yet from his humble office, he may be more responsible than any other single individual for the diet of surreal pap served up by the tabloids, one of the defining features of the present age. Antonia de Sancha, Bienvenida Buck, Pamela Bordes, O J Simpson on the *Richard and Judy Show* – all these twilight figures, famous for nothing memorable, catapulted by Max's genius into the headlines – a genius for the tall tale, but also, he insists, for friendship and truth.

"I've looked after some of the people I'm involved with for 25, 26 years. And if you wanted to make money from exposure you could sell one of those stories and retire, with £1m in your bank, because you know more about them than anyone – because if you don't have that knowledge you can't protect them.

"But they trust me – because 10 years go by and no one knows. That's the beauty of it." He sounds happy. But he's not smiling.

Tomorrow: the fourth tenor.

obituaries / gazette

Sir Charles Sopwith

Charles Sopwith was the Solicitor to the Board of Inland Revenue from 1963 to 1970, one of the architects of the 1972 European Communities Act and a creator of the Westminster system of European scrutiny.

Born in 1905, he was brought up in County Durham and never lost his North Country tones and attitudes. After school, he trained as a chartered accountant, qualifying in 1928. Ten years later he changed career and became a solicitor, and was clearly doing well when the outbreak of the Second World War took him into war work.

In 1943, he went to the Press Censorship division of the Ministry of Information and worked under Cyril Radcliffe KC, later Viscount Radcliffe, who formed a high opinion of his capacities. After the war, with Radcliffe's encouragement and support, Sopwith was taken on by the Board of Inland Revenue as a solicitor. At the age of 40, he was told that he was unlikely to get to the top, but in the event, by dint of hard work and his high legal ability, he worked up – after a two-year stint from 1961 to 1963 as Public Trustee – to become the Solicitor to the Board of Inland Revenue in 1963. He retired from the post on reaching the age of 65 in 1970.

The same year he became a Deputy Secretary in the Division of the Cabinet Office responsible for preparing the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Communities. As such he was chairman of a small legal committee, which was part of a team responsible for preparing the instructions for the European Communities Bill of 12 clauses and four schedules. This was carried into law in 1972, and brought about British entry into the Communities.

The Bill was hard fought in both Houses, but especially in the Commons, where its Second Reading was passed by only seven votes in emotional scenes. As a piece of drafting it was exceptional in that, although a Bill of the highest constitutional importance, it was passed into law through both Houses without one word's being amended. In later years, Sopwith was wont impliedly to regret that the Government White Paper (*The United Kingdom and the European Communities*, Cmnd 4715) was not more forthright about the implications, both constitutional and economic, of British membership of the Communities.

The final part of his career began when, at the age of 69, he was given the newly created post of Second Counsel to the Chairman of Committees at the House of Lords, in practice the learned counsel to the House for its European Communities Committee on all matters of European law. He served with Lord Diplock, in particular in his role as Chairman of the Law Sub-Committee of the European Communities Committee.

Diplock was only persuaded to take on that job in addition to that of a working Law Lord by being promised legal backing of a high order. In Sopwith, the promise was redeemed and they became a formidable duo and the best of friends. In both cases they were pro-European, but with an active sense of the limits of EC competence and the just requirements of British national needs.

Sopwith was one of the creators of the system of scrutiny by Parliamentary Committee of European Community proposals – which in time come to affect all our lives – by examining them at an early stage, hearing evidence, elucidating them with the help of experts, reporting on their probable effects and whether desirable or not, and whether requiring amendment. He, with his parliamentary masters and colleagues, realised that it was only by the hard work of understanding the policy issues involved that one could hope to affect the outcome of complicated negotiations in the Council of Ministers.

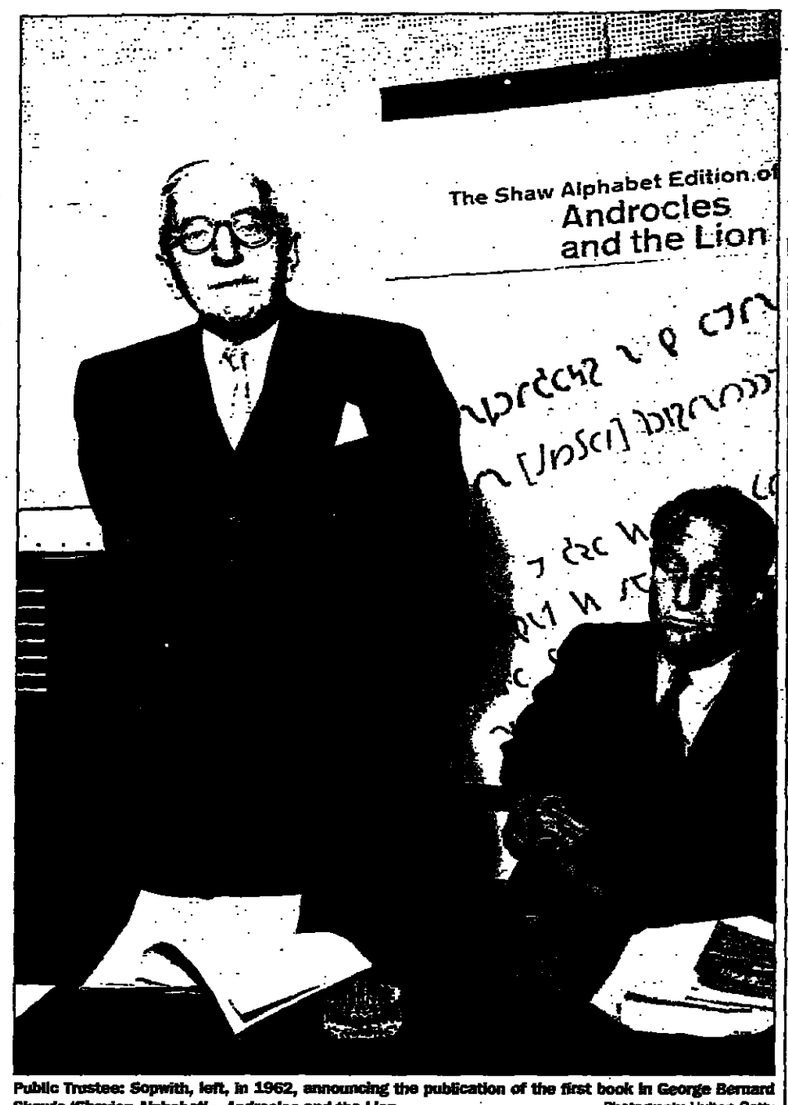
In the late Seventies and early Eighties Sopwith was instrumental in writing a notable series of reports on the EC company law harmonisation programme, such as *Group Accounts*, competition policy (*Competition Practice*), the supervision of the Community's finances (*EEC Budget*), and on the Community institutions (*Direct Elections to the European Parliament*). He eventually retired in 1982 at the age of 77.

Charles Sopwith was of the old school, not given to the expression of his emotions; not for him the instant intimacy of today. He had the highest standards and never countenanced the second-rate in others or spared himself. Though quiet and undemonstrative, he was invariably warm and supportive in relations with colleagues and staff. He will be remembered for his old-fashioned courtesy combined with a gentle twinkle. His dry sense of humour would extract unexpected amusing aspects from all persons and situations around him. He was deeply musical, and gave much voluntary effort to various musical charities and was for years a director and honorary fellow of the Royal Academy of Music.

He married, at the age of 40, Ivy Violet Yeates, but their happy marriage was prematurely brought to a close when she died in 1968, and he never remarried. Instead he devoted his later years to his nephews and nieces and their families, with whom he was able to relax and enjoy himself, especially in retirement, and give vent to his keen humour.

Michael Wheeler-Booth

Charles Ronald Sopwith, solicitor: born South Shields, Co Durham 12 November 1905; Assistant Solicitor, Board of Inland Revenue 1952-56, Principal Assistant Solicitor 1956-61, Solicitor 1963-70; Public Trustee 1961-63; Kt 1966; Deputy Secretary, Cabinet Office 1970-72; Second Counsel to Chairman of Committees, House of Lords 1974-82; married 1946 Ivy Violet Yeates (died 1968); died Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire 15 November 1996.



Public Trustee: Sopwith, left, in 1962, announcing the publication of the first book in George Bernard Shaw's 'Shavian Alphabet' – *Androcles and the Lion* Photograph: Hulton Getty

Monique Lange

A peculiarly Parisian phenomenon is the woman writer who is also an editor for one of the large publishers. Like her friend Elisabeth Gille, a gifted novelist and editor who died just before her, Monique Lange spent most of her adult life in the offices of publishers and magazines. She came of a family of intellectuals who included two philosophers, Henri Bergson and Emmanuel Berl, and her father Robert was a brilliant journalist about whose sad decline into mental decrepitude she was to write her last book, *Les Cahiers déchirés* ("Torn Notebooks") in 1994.

Like Marguerite Duras, she had spent her childhood in Indochina, and in the book she wrote about it in 1972, *Une petite fille sous une moustiquaire* ("A Little Girl under the Mosquito Net"), she relates her innocent incomprehension of religion and the complications of being a Jew. In a style that is always frank, fresh and lively, like a small but intelligent girl trying to explain puzzling things to herself, she writes: "All those people had died simply because they were Jews, and here I was making every effort not to be one of them."

Even in childhood she had always loved words, and had started to write in emulation of her father, who was "always scribbling". In the first book to bring her any great success, *Les Cabines de bain* ("The Bathing Huts", 1982), we find Lange at the seaside, at Roscoff, recuperating from an illness, and taking the opportunity of this enforced leisure to put down memories of incidents from her past:

> She believed in words. She believed so much in what words have the power to express that she was also to suffer physically because of them. She, the great talker, has trouble expressing herself, but she wants to convalesce at Roscoff, she's going to discover anew the people she loves . . . and also, perhaps, words.

The illness she was recovering from was heart trouble, from which she was to die, so her words about suffering through words were prophetic.

In a brilliant essay contributed to the special number on Jean Genet in *Le Magazine Littéraire* in September 1993, she tells us: "I was living in a *chambre de bonne* [a tiny attic] in the rue Jouffroy. I'd cast aside my bourgeois family to lead my own independent life." It was that intoxicating post-war period in Paris, when it seemed very heaven to be still alive after the Occupation and the Nazi death camps.

Lange had a job on a couple of magazines, run by Gallimard, *La Revue de cinéma* and the famous literary journal *Les Temps modernes*. She writes of her rapture at sitting next to Camus in the canteen – "all the girls wanted *him*" – and of her first meeting with Jean Genet. The title of her essay describes those first impressions of "a man with laughing eyes". There is a big photograph of Lange strolling arm-in-arm with Genet and his lover Abdallah in an Amsterdam street in 1959, and they make a lovely carefree trio. She tells us:

> I had sworn never to speak about Jean Genet. Don't know why – but, as he had done to so many others, he had turned on me and rejected my friendship . . .
>
> I was his slave in the years 1947-48. My editors complained I was never in my offices, because I was always humming down my stable of authors . . . I saw a small man with laughing eyes – he had the look of a child. He told me he had to get out of his hotel room because he was being tracked by the police, it was a serious matter. So I gave him my little room under the tiles, helped him to bring his things from the Hôtel de Chicago.
>
> Genet said he would come and see me next morning at Gallimard. I didn't know where I was going to spend the night but an actress friend put me up, Andrée Clément, one of whose friends slept with me and got me pregnant. I had to have an abortion, and when he heard that Jean Genet took pity on me and let me have my room back.

She discovers his books, reads them all avidly in what were then only rare limited editions, and falls totally under his spell. Genet introduced her to a fellow-spirit, Violette Leduc (to whom he had dedicated *Les Bonnes*). But when Monique Lange candidly but tactlessly told him he looked like Violette (who was no oil painting) he turned against her and was very cold and unhelpful even while Lange was beginning to edit his books for Gallimard. (He complained because she was also editing Violette, and he accused her of holding up the publication of his own works in favour of Violette's.)

Lange: limpid writing

It was all so typical of the atmosphere of those days, a ferment of friendship and hostility, love and anger, idealism and sordid encounters. But then Lange met the love of her life, a Spanish novelist who was also working for Gallimard, Juan Goytisolo, who married her. Genet referred to him as the hidalgo.

Monique Lange took over the translation section at Gallimard, where I met her in my vain attempts to gain permission to publish the French text of Paul Valéry's long poem *La Jeune Parque* with my own verse translation *en face*. She was kind, but vague about something so unimportant to her, so important to me. She was friendly with many great names, including William Faulkner, whose French rights she controlled, Jean Genet, of course, and many others. (I tried again to obtain permission this year, and no one took any notice: at least Lange had consented to see me and discuss the matter.)

She also wrote film scripts: Roberto Rossellini's *Vanina Vanini*, Henri-Georges Clouzot's *La Prisonnière*, Vittorio de Seta's *L'invitata* and Joseph Losey's *La Truite* (adapted by her from the novel by one of her stable, Roger Vaillant). She wrote two good biographies of Piaf and Cocteau: *Jean Cocteau, prince sans royaume* (1989) and *Histoire de Piaf* (1988).

But it is for her beautifully limpid style in the novel that Monique Lange will be remembered best: *Les Poissons-chats* ("Catfish" – her term for men who are not attracted by women; her first book, 1959); *Les Platanes* ("The Plane Trees", 1960). Her husband Juan Goytisolo has written an affectionate memoir in the 1950s and 1960s when they started living together in an apartment in the rue Poissonnière, *En las reinos de Taifa*, which was published in French as *Les Royaumes déchirés* (1986).

That word, *déchiré* ("torn") brings me back to Lange's last book, *Les Cahiers déchirés*, in which she writes about "the unbelievable full-stop that death implies when one does not want to be dead . . . The dead do not return. Only books have the duty and the power to make them come back to life, through words . . ." The title refers to her tearing-up of all the notebooks she wrote covering the last 18 years of her life, so as to be able to devote herself without their anecdotal help to the memoir of her father, a life that only death can put an end to. It is an account of five years of desperate existence with his mental disease: "Now, this march towards death, this combat for life, is a part of our daily existence . . . my father, since he was laid low, is no longer my enemy. For his own sake, and for ours, I would wish it all over for him."

Robert Lange was a famous journalist who led a brilliant and distracted social life all over the world. "I'm the one man on earth who met both Clemenceau and Chou En-Lai," he would endlessly repeat in a self-absorbed monotone.

Monique Lange writes of her own approaching death, indirectly: "Unable to finish his memoirs, they are written for him by his daughter as an act of true homage and true love. I know I must give this account of his last, interminable journey. I know too that my writing of it will take me away, to some other place . . ." Fortunately, her death came suddenly.

James Kirkup

Monique Lange, writer and editor: born Paris 11 September 1926; married Juan Goytisolo (one daughter); died Paris 7 October 1996.

Art Porter

The jazz saxophonist Art Porter came from a musical family. His father, Art Porter Snr, was a professional pianist who led his own band, worked with the John Stubblefield band and, for a time, accompanied the singer Carmen McRae. Porter junior began playing saxophone at 15, initially in his father's band in Little Rock, Arkansas. His prodigal talents led him into some misfortune, however, and he was arrested and charged for working under age in a night club. Fortunately for him, the case caught the attention of the state attorney general, Bill Clinton, and, thanks to his involvement, the legislature changed the law, allowing youngsters to work in such establishments, if chaperoned by a legal guardian. The Act became known as the "Art Porter Bill".

Porter was born in 1961 and studied at the Berklee School of Music and at the Virginia Commonwealth University. He became a protégé of the pianist and educator Ellis Marsalis and, after moving to Chicago in the mid-Eighties, undertook further studies with the tenor saxophonist Von Freeman.

The less academic side of his career was conducted at a more empirical level. He worked in the widely contrasting musical environments provided by Jack McDuff's earthy, organ-led combo and the exotic Pharaoh Sanders unit as it progressed the John Coltrane message.

Porter's initial influence had been Charlie Parker and his be-bop-based style proved a useful tool in most of the situations in which he found himself. His interest in Coltrane had grown during his involvement with Sanders but he had avoided the fierce extremes into which this might have led him. He was a believer in communication and he wanted his music to have a wider audience. He shunned the repertory, hard bop of the neo-classical jazz movement and was happy to introduce funkier, rhythmic ingredients into his well-heated musical pot.

On the tour circuit in the Nineties, he demonstrated his penetrating sound and an improvisational style that was more concerned with modest variation than in-depth musical analysis. The success of this policy was endorsed by an audience response that suggested that he was correct in calling most heavily on his experience with the organ groups and on his own liking for R&B.

At the time of his death, Porter could have been in Europe. A trip, including a week at Ronnie Scott's Club in London, had been proposed but his record company had influenced him to go to Bangkok for the 1996 Thailand International Jazz Festival. He was drowned in an accident when his boat capsized on a reservoir in western Thailand.

Barry McRae

Art Porter, saxophonist: born 1961; married (two sons); died Kratha Taek, Thailand 23 November 1996.

Porter: penetrating sound and improvisational style

Vernon Elliott

The story of Vernon Elliott's meeting with the Guyanese dancer Ken "Shakehips" Johnson [obituary by John Pilgrim, 30 November] is wrong on several counts, writes **Val Wilmer**.

As Johnson's biographer, I spent a lot of time with Vernon and Nora Mukle to ascertain exactly when this took place. Eliott was at college and still carrying his double-bass about in 1936 when taken to the Shim-Sham Club by a neighbour. Having played in a couple of dance bands, he sat in for a few tunes with the American pianist Garland Wilson and made an impression on Johnson, who was in the audience. This was by no means a regular job, and Johnson, who had been fronting a touring band for just a few months, was a long way from the established figure he became when he went into the Café de Paris three years later.

The Café was not bombed until March 1941. By then, the Shim-Sham was long gone. Elliott had been called up, so could not have remained active in music, and, despite the constantly repeated myth, Johnson and one of his saxophonists were the only musicians to lose their lives.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

CHURCHILL: Peacefully, on Advent Sunday, 1 December, John Churchill, musician, much-loved husband of Jean and father of Jonathan, Nicola and Peter. Private cremation. Thanksgiving service in St Giles's Church, Sidbury, Devon, on Wednesday 11 December at 2.30pm. No flowers by request but donations if desired to Sidmouth Hospicecare or Sidmouth Hospital Comforts Fund, c/o Northeott Brothers, Church Street, Sidford, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 9RE.

JESSEL: Dame Penelope, peacefully at home in Cassington, on 2 December, widow of Bobby, much loved mother of Stephen and David and grandmother of Ben, Robert and Miranda. Funeral at St Laurence's Church, Appleton, on Saturday 7 December at 2.30pm.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Birthdays

The Marchioness of Anglesey, former chairman, Broadcasting Complaints Commission, 72; Sir Stephen Barrett, former ambassador to Poland, 65; Lt-Col Sir Simon Bland, former royal equerry, 73; Mr Jeff Bridges, actor, 47; Mrs Angela Browning MP, Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, 50; Mr Horst Buchholz, actor, 64; Mr Ronnie Corbett, comedian, 66; Admiral Sir David Dobson, former chief of staff to Commander Allied Naval Forces Southern Europe, 58; Miss Deanna Durbin (Mme Charles David), actress and singer, 75; Mr Adrian Head, circuit judge, 73; Miss Gemma Jones, actress, 54; Mr Clive Leach, chairman, Butler Advertising and Marketing, 62; Mrs Pamela Winifred Matthews, former Principal, Westfield College, 82; Mr Richard Meade, Three-Day Eventer, 58; Miss Yvonne Minton, mezzo-soprano, 58; Lord Morris of Castle Morris, former Principal, St David's University College, Lampeter, 66; Dr A.L. Rowse, Emeritus Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford, 93; Miss Pamela Stephenson, actress and comedienne, 46.

Anniversaries

Births: Thomas Carlyle, author, 1795; Rainer Maria Rilke, poet, 1875. **Deaths:** Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal and duc de Richelieu, statesman, 1642; Thomas Hobbes, political philosopher, 1679; Edward Benjamin Britten, Baron Britten, composer, 1976. **On this day:** Nicholas Breakspear was elected Pope Adrian IV, thus becoming the only Englishman to be pope, 1154; income tax was first introduced, by William Pitt, 1798. **Today** is the Feast Day of St Anno, St Bernard of Parma, St John of Damascus, St Maruthas, St Osmund and St Sola.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Margaret Timmers and Eric Turner, "Painted Interiors in the V&A", 2.30pm.

Tate Gallery: Colin Cruise, "Imagination and Faith in Victorian Painting", 1pm.

Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Professor Ian Stewart, "Chaos and the Quantum", 1pm.

Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Mr Jeremy Hanley MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, hosted a lunch yesterday at Admiralty House, London SW1, for Mr Masahiko Komura, the Japanese State Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Dinners

United Oxford and Cambridge University Club
Sir Peter Yarranton, former Chairman of the Sports Council, was the principal speaker at a dinner held yesterday at the United Oxford and Cambridge University Club House, London SW1. His subject was "Professionalism in Sport".

Byron Society
Mr Geoffrey Bond hosted the Byron Society's Christmas Dinner held yesterday evening at the Carlton Club, St James's, London SW1. Mr Anthony Lejeune spoke on "The Ghost of St James's".

Coningsby Club
Mr Michael Howard QC MP, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, was the guest of honour and speaker at the Christmas Dinner of the Coningsby Club held yesterday evening at the Army and Navy Club, London SW1. Mr Anthony Parsons, Chairman, presided.

English-Speaking Union

Mrs Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, gave the English-Speaking Union's 1997 Churchill Lecture yesterday at Guildhall, London EC2. Baroness Brigstocke, Chairman of the Union, presided. Sir John Coles also spoke.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, opens the new Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, Outward Bound Trust, chairs a meeting of the Outward Bound Council at Buckingham Palace. The Queen Mother dines with the Benchers of the Middle Temple. The Duke of York, Patron, the Royal Marine and Royal Navy 1997 Adventure Rowing Team, attends the launch of the team's boat at the Ivory House, St Katharine's Dock, London E1; and attends the Combined Services v Apprentice rugby match at the Recreation Ground, Devonport, Plymouth. The Princess Royal, President, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, opens Wandsworth Carers Centre, London SW19, as Commodore in Chief, St John Ambulance and Nursing Cadets, attends a briefing, "St John Ambulance in Care in the Community (CPCC)" at 94 Lots Road Club, London SW1, as President, Save the Children Fund, visits Save the Children Fund Headquarters to meet staff, London SW8, presents the Torch Trophy Trust's Annual Awards at Simpson (Piccadilly) Limited, London W1; and presides at a dinner for Heads of Delegations attending a conference on the implementation of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina at St James's Palace. Prince of Wales, President, British Red Cross Society, visits the Lancaster and Morecambe Centre, Morecambe, Lancashire; and in Chichester, presides at ceremonies for the conferment of Higher Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas at Lancaster University.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, Whitehall; Wellington Company Grenadier Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

Parents to be assessed with child in care

LAW REPORT

4 December 1996

Re C (a minor) (Interim care order: residential assessment); House of Lords (Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Lord Griffiths, Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead, Lord Hope of Craighead) **28 November 1996**

A court making an interim care order in favour of the local authority had power under s 38(6) of the Children Act 1989 to direct that both the child concerned and its parents be placed at a residential assessment centre pending the final hearing of care proceedings.

The House of Lords allowed the parents' appeal against the decision of the Court of Appeal (Case Summaries, 11 November 1996) and restored the decision of Mrs Justice Hogg, directing that the parents and child be placed together in a residential assessment unit.

Section 38 provides:

(6) Where the court makes an interim care order, or interim supervision order, it may give such directions (if any) as it considers appropriate with regard to the medical or psychiatric examination or other assessment of the child . . .

(7) A direction under subsection (6) may be to the effect that there is to be – (a) no such examination or assessment . . .

The child, born on 11 June 1995, was made the subject of an interim care order after suffering serious non-accidental injuries for which his parents were unable to provide a satisfactory explanation. The parents were both young and inexperienced, the mother being 17 at the time of his birth, the father 16, and lacked family backing. The court appointed a guardian *ad litem* for the child, who was placed with foster parents.

Social workers employed by the local authority concluded that an in-depth assessment at a residential unit was essential to test the parents' long-term ability to cope. That recommendation was supported by a clinical psychologist who had assessed the parents, and by the guardian *ad litem*.

The local authority did not agree, and opposed the application on the ground that the court had no jurisdiction to make the order under section 38(6). The judge rejected that argument and, in the exercise of her discretion, decided to make the order sought; but the Court of Appeal reversed her decision.

Anthony Rumbelow QC and Gillian Irving (Sharpe Pritchard, for Booth & Middleton, Oldham) for the mother; A. Rumbelow QC and Anthony Hayden (Sharpe Pritchard, for Norcross Leer & Riches, Oldham) for the father; David Harris QC and Maureen Roddy (G.F. Smith, Oldham) for the local authority; Lesley Newton and Ceri Warnock (Temperley Taylor, Oldham) for the child's guardian ad litem.

Lord Browne-Wilkinson said the judge's attention had not been drawn to the then unreported decision of the Court of Appeal in *Re M (minors) (Interim care order: directions)* [1996] 3 FCR 137, holding that there was no jurisdiction under section 38(6) to order such residential assessment.

The appeal court in the present case held that it was bound by its earlier decision in *Re M*, but was plainly unhappy at the result.

There were two possible constructions of section 38(6) and (7), one narrow, the other purposive and broader. The Court of Appeal in *Re M* adopted the narrow view. It held that the words "other assessment of the child" had to be construed *ejusdem generis* with the words "medical or psychiatric examination", and attached decisive importance to the fact that the subsection only referred to examination or assessment "of the child", not of any other person.

His Lordship could not accept this narrow construction. The Act should be construed purposively so as to give effect to the underlying intentions of Parliament. The purpose of subsection (6) was to enable the court to obtain the information necessary for its own decision.

It was true that subsections (6) and (7) only referred to assessment "of the child" but it was impossible to assess a young child divorced from its environment. The interaction between the child and its parents or other carers was an essential element in making any assessment of the child.

The subsections should be broadly construed. They conferred jurisdiction on the court to order or prohibit any assessment which involved the participation of the child and was directed to providing the court with material which it required to reach a proper decision at the final hearing.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK Spot
US	1.6520	9-7	36-33	1.000	—	—	0.6354
Canada	2.2281	54-49	164-156	1.3488	24-23	75-73	0.8610
Germany	2.5979	69-61	203-193	1.5685	30-28	90-87	1.0000
France	8.7860	217-198	640-606	5.2942	88-81	268-258	3.3796
Italy	2542.2	31-45	103-123	1538.3	26-35	91-101	981.968
Japan	167.86	85-91	281-276	113.73	48-47	149-147	72.5003
ECU	1.3371	21-16	66-61	1.2256	13-14	44-45	0.8167
Belgium	53.331	15-10	42-38	32.282	7-5	23-17	20.6060
Denmark	9.9039	222-177	655-556	5.9951	93-79	298-247	3.8271
Netherlands	2.9037	62-74	240-326	1.7577	39-37	121-115	1.1220
Ireland	1.0009	5-1	16-10	1.6505	6-3	10-6	0.3868
Norway	10.775	160-90	380-270	6.5223	50-25	119-69	4.2636
Spain	217.70	12-21	31-48	131.81	15-20	40-49	84.1402
Sweden	11.247	15-8	44-33	6.8081	41-16	152-101	4.3480
Switzerland	2.2000	85-76	239-228	1.3317	40-37	119-114	0.8501
Australia*	2.0708	10-16	15-25	1.2535	14-16	33-35	0.8002
Hong Kong	12.774	93-52	240-183	7.7325	2-0	2-7	4.9362
Malaysia	4.1736	0-0	0-0	2.5265	27-30	80-85	1.6128
New Zealand*	2.3355	64-71	155-168	1.4137	54-56	97-99	0.9025
Saudi Arabia	6.1958	0-0	0-0	3.7505	1-4	5-9	2.3942
Singapore	2.3186	0-0	0-0	1.4035	24-19	70-65	0.8959

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.6322	0.9998	Nigeria	132.200	80.0000
Austria	18.2038	11.0228	Oman	0.6362	0.3850
Brazil	1.7084	1.0335	Pakistan	58.2320	40.0799
China	13.7176	8.3011	Philippines	43.5289	26.3400
Egypt	5.6235	3.4051	Portugal	262.850	157.960
Finland	7.7273	4.6761	Qatar	6.0131	3.6400
Ghana	2.84388	1.7220	Russia	912.345	552.100
Greece	406.201	245.810	South Africa	7.6990	4.6590
India	58.9785	35.7000	Taiwan	45.4603	27.5100
Kuwait	0.4961	0.3002	UAE	6.0713	3.6740

*Note: Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount (cheaper from spot rate); those quoted low to high are at a premium (pricier to spot rate). *Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 0003. Calls cost 36p per minute (cheap rate) 48p other times.

Tourist Rates

£ Buys		£ Buys		£ Buys	
Australia(Dollars)	1.9925	France(Francs)	8.5050	New Zealand(Dollars)	2.2995
Austria(Schillings)	17.800	Germany(Marks)	2.5035	Norway(Kroner)	10.5600
Belgium(Francs)	51.200	Greece(Drachmae)	399.0000	Portugal(Escudos)	255.0000
Canada(Dollars)	2.2200	Hong Kong(Dollars)	12.7100	Spain(Pesetas)	212.4000
Cyprus(Pounds)	0.7595	Ireland(Punts)	0.9720	Sweden(Kronor)	11.5000
Denmark(Kroner)	9.7000	Italy(Lira)	2508.0000	Switzerland(Francs)	2.1350
Holland(Guilders)	2.8350	Japan(Yen)	188.5000	Turkey(Lira)	165478.0000
Finland(Marks)	7.7000	Malta(Lira)	0.5840	United States(Dollars)	1.6475

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US	
Base	6.00%	Discount	2.50%	Prime	8.75%
Finance		Lombard	4.50%	Discount	5.00%
Intervention	3.20%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.25%
Italy		Prime	4.75%	Spain	
Discount	7.5%	Discount	5.00%	10-Day Repo	6.75%
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden	
Advances	2.50%	Discount	3.25%	Repo (Ave)	4.60%

Japan	
Discount	0.50%
Belgium	
Discount	2.50%
Central	3.00%
Switzerland	
Discount	1.00%
Lombard	4.25%

Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
UK	7⅞	7.07	7⅞/⅞	7.33	Netherlands	8¾	4.62	6¼	5.55
US	6⅞	5.80	7⅞	6.00	Spain	10.10%	6.02	10.15%	6.88
Japan	5⅝%	1.68	3⅞	2.47	Italy	9⅞	8.78	9⅞	7.50
Australia	8¾	6.72	10	6.96	Belgium	5	4.51	7	5.72
Germany	6.25%	4.31	6.25%	5.62	Sweden	13	5.87	6	6.88
France	5¾	4.50	7.25%	5.58	ECU (AT)	6	4.82	7⅛	5.86

Source: HSBC Markets Research. Yields calculated on local basis. ** Denotes new benchmark

Money Market Rates

	O'Night	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	6½ - 6¼	5¾ - 6	6⅛ - 6⅛	6⅛ - 6⅛	6½ - 6⅜	6⅝ - 6⅝
Sterling CDs	- -	- -	6½ -	6⅛ -	6½ -	6½ -
Local Authority Deps	6½	5½	6½	6½	6¼	6½
Discount Market Deps	6½	5½	- -	- -	- -	- -
Treasury Bills (Buy)	- -	- -	5⅞ -	6½ -	- -	- -
Dollar CDs	- -	- -	5⅛ -	5¼ -	5¼ -	5.28 -
ECU Linked Dep	- -	- -	4¼ -	4⅛ -	4⅛ -	4⅛ -

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract		Settlement price	High/Low for day		Est Ccnts traded	Open interest
Long Gilt	(Dec 96)	111-31	112-17	111-23	45810	43998
German Gvt Bd	(Dec 96)	102.65	102.99	102.36	233849	136897
Italian Bond	(Dec 96)	129.54	129.83	129.06	59402	34816
Japan Gvt Bd	(Dec 96)	126.71	126.72	126.54	1912	n/a
3 Mth Sterling	(Dec 96)	93.56	93.58	93.55	1515	67927
	(Mar 97)	93.30	93.38	93.28	116.40	107605
3 Mth Euromark	(Dec 96)	96.78	96.81	96.77	28384	187510
	(Mar 97)	96.65	96.69	96.63	43049	217004
3 Mth Eurolira	(Dec 96)	92.97	92.98	92.93	14234	67646
	(Mar 97)	93.65	93.68	93.60	15435	77523
3 Mth Euryen	(Mar 97)	99.45	99.45	99.45	200	n/a
3 Mth Euroswiss	(Dec 96)	97.90	97.94	97.87	3676	25022
	(Mar 97)	97.94	97.99	97.92	7388	35385
3 Mth ECU	(Dec 96)	95.85	95.89	95.85	1170	8138
	(Mar 97)	95.93	95.96	95.91	1203	7127
FTSE 100	(Dec 96)	40700	40830	40590	14884	92736
FTSE 250	(Dec 96)	44410			0	3430

Liffe FTSE Index Option

Settlement price: 4062.00 closing offer price

Series	4000	4050	4100	4150	Call/Put Total/vols
Dec	84/13	46/27	20/52	5/100	- -
Jan	113/32	77/48	48/71	27/104	- -
Feb	141/43	108/66	80/90	55/118	- -
Mar	158/70	124/87	94/110	71/137	- -

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange

$/tonne	Cash	3 mths	Volume
Aluminium HG	1636-7	1634-5	64230
Aluminium Alloy	1340-5	1352-8	1322
Copper A	2340-5	2375-6	93861
Lead	575-5.5	581-3	7166
Nickel	6725-45	6820-30	6216
Tin	6235-45	6225-30	3345
Zinc	1334-6	1354-5	24672

LME Stocks		chg
	1825	
Copper	75700	- 100
Lead	93425	+ 1000
Nickel	6216	- 375
Tin	4723	+ 634
Zinc	32825	- 1031

Stock volumes & change in tonnes as at Tue 4 Dec '96

PRECIOUS METALS

per fine oz	$	£	Coins	$	£		$	£
Platinum	372.00	223.50	Britannia	386	234	Krugerrands	383.375	228.225
Palladium	115.25	69.35	Britannia half oz	196	119	Sovs	84/94	51-57
Silver spot	4895C	293.0C	Britannia 25 oz	132	81	Nobles	370.388	224.234
Gold Bullion	387.40	232.96	Britannia 10 oz	53	32	Maple Leaf	368-385	223-233

AGRICULTURAL

Cocoa		Coffee		Barley		Potatoes		Potatoes	
LIFFE	£/tonne	LIFFE	$/tonne	LIFFE	£/tonne	LIFFE	£/tonne	ATA	Gld/100kg
Dec	930	Nov	1039	Nov	90.0	Mar	63.00		
Mar	944	Jan	1232	Jan	91.60	Apr	63.00	Feb	[illegible]
May	951	Mar	1270	Mar	92.60	May	63.00	Apr	[illegible]
Jul	963.0	May	1287	May	57	Vol	7	Vol	n a
Vol		Vol		Vol					

White Sugar		Freight		Wheat		Corn	
LIFFE	$/tonne	LIFFE	$10/index pt	LIFFE	£/tonne	CBOT#	Cents/bushel
Mar	267.60	Nov	962	Nov	93.40		Hi Lo Settl
May	268.10	Dec	1489	Jan	95.40	Dec	257.75-254.25 [illegible]
Aug	253.90	Jul	779	Mar	96.70	Mar	267.00-262.25 [illegible]
Vol	4046	Index	3790	Vol	476	May	270.50-266.25 [illegible]

Other Softs (Agricultural)

Nov	Wool (64,800 lb)	$/tonne	[illegible]	Jan	Soya Oil	FL/100kg	[illegible]
Jan	Copra (1)	$/tonne	142.00	Nov	Coconut Oil (1)	$/tonne	[illegible]
Mar	Cotton (100	[illegible]	[illegible]	Dec	Sunflower Oil	$/tonne	[illegible]
Dec	Wool	Australia	505.00	Dec	Rapeseed Oil	FL/100kg	[illegible]
Jan	Rubber	Malaysia	318.00	Dec	Groundnut Oil	$/tonne	[illegible]

Origin: (Touch £C - each origin. [illegible] Source: FT Information

ENERGY

Brent Crude	($ barrel)		Gasoil	($/tonne)	WTI	Products †	($/tonne)
IPE	$/barrel	+/chg	Vrange	IPE	close	+/chg	8pm Spot CIF North West Europe
Dec	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Unleaded Gasoline [illegible]
Jan	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Heavy Fuel Oil [illegible]
Feb	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Naphtha [illegible]
Vol	[illegible]	Index	[illegible]	Vol	[illegible]	Apr	[illegible] EC Gasoil [illegible]

COMMODITY INDICES

*CRB Indices	Base Date	+Spot	%Day Chg	Dec 31st	% Month chg	Year ago	% Yr chg
Index	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Agriculture	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Energy	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Industrial Metals	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Livestock	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Precious Metals	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Source: Goldman Sachs & Co. *CSC is a trademark and service mark of Goldman, Sachs & Co. Index as of 2 Dec 1996.

100 Largest Insurance Funds

Stock	Bid	Mid	Offer	Stock	Bid	Mid	Offer
Abbey Equity Ser 4	[illegible]		[illegible]	Legal & General Managed Accum	[illegible]		[illegible]
Abbey Managing Ser 4	[illegible]		[illegible]	London & Manchester Pensions A			
Abbey Managed Ser 4	[illegible]		[illegible]	London Equity	[illegible]		
Abbey Pensions Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]	London Mixed	[illegible]		
Abbey Life Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]	M & G Managed Bond Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]
Abbey Equity Acc Ser 5	[illegible]		[illegible]	M & G Managed Bond Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]
Abbey Multiple Inv Acc 92	[illegible]		[illegible]	Merchant Investors Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Allied Dunbar Distribution Bond	[illegible]		[illegible]	Mutual Security	[illegible]		[illegible]
Allied Dunbar Equity Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	National Provident Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Allied Dunbar Managing Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	NatWest Security Mgd	[illegible]		[illegible]
Allied Dunbar Property Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	Norwich Union Mgd Ex NUAM MF	[illegible]		[illegible]
AXA Equity & Law Ser Ser 6	[illegible]		[illegible]	Norwich Union Managed Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
AXA Equity & Law Life Ser 6	[illegible]		[illegible]	Norwich Union Managed Non Profits	[illegible]		[illegible]
AXA Equity & Law Life Ser Ser 5	[illegible]		[illegible]	NPI Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Berdale Equity Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	Royal Equity Agr	[illegible]		[illegible]
Barclays International Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	Peer Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Barclays Managed Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	Prudential Mutual Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Black Horse Income Fund Ser 3	[illegible]		[illegible]	Prudential Inst. Mgt Ser 1	[illegible]		[illegible]
Black Horse Mngd Inc Ser	[illegible]		[illegible]	Royal Life Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Capital Managed Ser 1	[illegible]		[illegible]	Royal Scottish Growth Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
CMI Ed Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]	Royal Scottish UK Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]
CMI Ed Supreme Mngd	[illegible]		[illegible]	Scottish Amicable Equity Ser 1	[illegible]		[illegible]
CM Nat'l Profile Bond	[illegible]		[illegible]	Scottish Amicable Managed Ser 1	[illegible]		[illegible]
Confederation Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]	Scottish Equitable Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Commercial Union Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]	Scottish Life Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Commercial Union UK Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]	Scottish Mutual Salary	[illegible]		[illegible]
Commercial Union Wide Profile	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Prov Inst Blue Chip	[illegible]		[illegible]
Edge Star Managed 1	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Prov Inst Wide Profile	[illegible]		[illegible]
Family Pensions	[illegible]		[illegible]	Scottish Widows International	[illegible]		[illegible]
Friends Provident Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]	Scottish Widows Mixed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Friends Provident UK Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]	Standard Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]
Friends Provident Avon Profile	[illegible]		[illegible]	Standard European	[illegible]		[illegible]
General Accident Gain Profile	[illegible]		[illegible]	Standard Fair Deal	[illegible]		[illegible]
GA Pro Mutual Agr Grp	[illegible]		[illegible]	Standard Fixed Interest	[illegible]		[illegible]
GA Pro Mutual Mgd Grp	[illegible]		[illegible]	Standard Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Star Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Alliance Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]
GRE Managed Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Alliance Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
GRE International Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Life Deferred Distribution	[illegible]		[illegible]
GRE Managed Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Life Distribution	[illegible]		[illegible]
Hill Samuel Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Life Equity Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]
Hill Samuel Managed Ser A	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Life Con Century Eq	[illegible]		[illegible]
Ion Life Globe Regd Pnsn Ser 2	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Life Con Century Mgd	[illegible]		[illegible]
J Rothschild Sun Pnsn Mgd	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Life Con Maple Leaf Eq Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]
Lautrec Inst Mgd UK Mgd Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	Sun Life Con Maple Leaf Mgd Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]
Lautrec Managed Acc Ser 3	[illegible]		[illegible]	TSB Equity	[illegible]		[illegible]
Lautrec Un Equity Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	TSB Homebuyer	[illegible]		[illegible]
Legal & General Equity Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]	TSB Managed	[illegible]		[illegible]
Legal & General International Acc	[illegible]		[illegible]				

UNIT TRUST GUIDE

d ex dividend
e exit charge applies when units are sold
buy formerly 'offer'
sell formerly 'bid'
x Non SIB recognised funds

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Insider dealing jury fails to reach verdict

Jill Treanor and Peter Rodgers

The insider dealing trial of Douglas Swinden, the former director of strategy at Eastern Electricity, ended inconclusively yesterday after the jury failed to reach a verdict.

This leaves Dr Swinden, 53, facing a retrial in the new year if Ian Lang, Secretary of State for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), decides to pursue the case, though doubts were raised yesterday about whether it would go ahead.

Separately, it emerged yesterday that in the wake of this setback that the DTI had secured a conviction in another insider trading case, the first this year.

The DTI confirmed that Geoffrey Atkinson and John Hawksby were found guilty on 1 November of insider trading in the shares of Queens Moat Houses. The two men are due to be sentenced tomorrow.

Legal sources said it would be usual for the case of Dr Swinden to be tried again, but the trial judge, Mr Justice Mitchell indicated he did not think a retrial would be necessary.

"I would like to place on the record my feelings for what they are worth. But I do feel it would be wrong to proceed with the matter," the judge said at Snaresbrook Crown Court, east London.

He said: "There were very unusual circumstances in the case." They included evidence of the company secretary of Eastern, who told Dr Swinden, when asked, that he did not believe the information was unpublished and price-sensitive and therefore he could see no reason prohibiting Dr Swinden from buying shares in another company.

The jury deliberated for seven and a half hours but failed to agree.

Dr Swinden had denied the two charges of insider dealing between 24 June and 1 August 1994.

These were the first charges brought under the Criminal Justice Act 1993 which gave the DTI greater powers in insider dealing cases.

"We are considering our position," a spokesman for the DTI said yesterday. A decision is expected within the week.

The DTI alleged that Dr Swinden bought shares in Seeboard, another electricity company, before a price-sensitive, confidential report by the regulator was released.

Dr Swinden had bought 2,000 Seeboard shares at 350p each out of a £15,000 bonus he had received from Eastern.

Seeboard shares rose 100p in a month after the report by Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, was published

Clare Montgomery QC, prosecuting, said during the trial "Dr Swinden was in a privileged position compared with anyone who was thinking about buying shares. He knew there was good news around the corner and bought those shares when he should not have."

Professor Littlechild wrote to the directors of the 12 regional electricity companies on 24 June 1994, giving proposals for price controls. He made them public on August 11.

"The professor was proposing a better deal for the companies. This was a considerable improvement upon changes which had caused the Stock Exchange shock, with the effect that millions of pounds was wiped off the value of the shares," Ms Montgmery said.

"The information Dr Swinden had was not in the public domain. The public did not have copies of the letter that he had been given," she said.

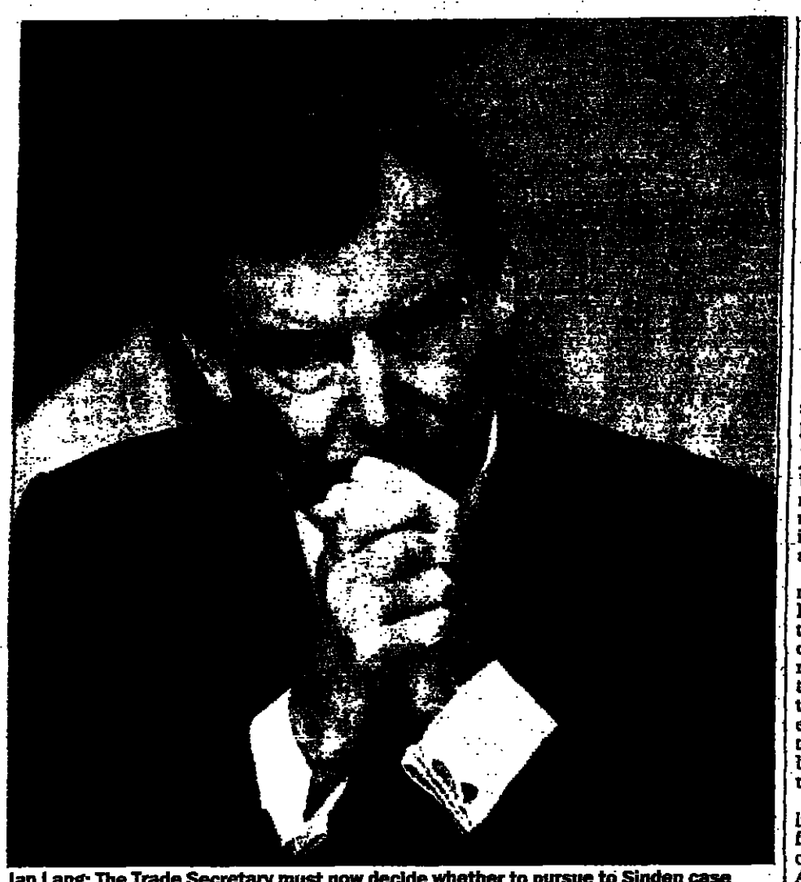
Dr Swinden denied using price sensitive information and said there was no indication whether share prices would rise or not as result of the regulator's announcement.

Comment, page 21

The DTI's 10-year record

Insider dealing convictions

1996	Geoffrey Atkinson and John Hawksby awaiting sentence this week. Convicted on 1 November of dealing in Queens Moat Houses shares.
1995	Brian Ridge fined £1,300 and costs for dealing in London Scottish Bank and Park Ford Gp.
1994	Ian Morrissey and Lorelle Staines each fined £1,500, dealing in Aaronson Bros.
1993	No convictions
1992	David Gray, 6 months suspended for 2 years, fined £5,000 and £500 costs, trading in Pleasurama. Three other people's convictions in the same case overturned on appeal in 1994.
1991	Frederick Stebbing fined £5000 and £500 costs, and Peter Sewell £24,000 and £5,000 costs, for trading in Camotech. Ivor Goodman 18 months imprisonment, 9 months suspended, disqualified for 10 years as director, for trading in Unigroup shares
1990	John Henry Lukins fined £750 and £432 costs, Peter Bernard Lukins fined £500 and £290 costs, trading in shares of Pittard Garnet. Malcolm Gooding 120 hours community service, £500 costs, trading in Hawtal Whiting
1989	Nicholas Rushbrooke fined £2,000 and £750 costs, trading in Piccadilly Radio. Keith Robinson fined £1000 and £500 costs, trading in Mercantile House Holdings. John Hales fined £15,000, £1,000 costs, trading in Minet Holdings
1988	William Reardon-Smith fined £3,000, £2,000 costs, trading in Reardon-Smith Line
1987	Ronald Jenkins fined £10,000, £2,000 costs, trading in Steel Brothers and British & Commonwealth. Geoffrey Collier, 12 months sentence suspended for two years, £25,000 fine and £7,000 costs.



Ian Lang: The Trade Secretary must now decide whether to pursue to Sinden case

United Airlines steps up attack on alliance

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

United Airlines, the world's largest carrier, yesterday stepped up its attack on the proposed alliance between British Airways and American Airlines as officials from the UK and US governments resume their "open skies" negotiations aimed at liberalising access to Heathrow airport.

The outcome of this latest round of talks, which start in London today and is expected to continue until Friday, could determine whether the US regulatory authorities will give the BA-American partnership their approval. The US government has already stated that it will only approve the alliance if the UK frees-up access to Heathrow.

Cyril Murphy, United Airline's head of international affairs, said the link-up should only be approved if American Airlines gave up the bulk of its lucrative take-off and landing slots at Heathrow.

Stepping up United's lobbying effort, he said this would mean American losing 30 slots at the airport, plus a further six at Chicago and 12 at John F Kennedy airport in New York. These would then be re-allocated to other US carriers by the American Department of Transportation. In addition, BA and American should be prevented from obtaining new slots for 5 years.

"The price should be paid by the guys who are eliminating the competition, not the guys who are being asked to provide the competition," said Mr Murphy.

The alliance would give BA and American around 60 per cent of seat capacity between the UK and US and give them a monopoly on routes between Heathrow and Boston, Dallas and Miami.

The UK competition watchdog, the Office of Fair Trading, is also thought to have called for the two carriers to divest themselves of slots at Heathrow if the alliance is to escape a lengthy probe by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The OFT report is currently being considered by the Department of Trade and Industry, with a decision expected in the next couple of weeks.

However a spokesman for British Airways last night insisted the company would fight any proposals to give up slots: "We see absolutely no reason why we should hand over to United or indeed any other airline assets which we've invested very heavily in over the fifty years we've operated at Heathrow."

British Energy rump nets £120m for Treasury

Michael Harrison

The flotation of British Energy yesterday turned out to possess a silver lining for taxpayers after all, as the Government raised £120m by selling its remaining stake in the nuclear power company.

The sale was part of a wider auction of the Government's rump holdings in privatised utilities, which raised a total of £257m to help fund the tax cuts announced in last week's Budget.

Rothschilds, acting for the Treasury, sold 81 million British Energy shares to HSBC James Capel at 147.5p a share – a near 50 per cent premium to the price at which the partly-paid shares were floated in July.

The auction also saw Dresdner Kleinwort Benson pick up 18.8 million shares in Scottish Power equivalent to around 1.6 per cent of the company.

The Treasury also took advantage of a buoyant market to dispose of small residual stakes in National Grid, Northern Ireland Electricity, Scottish Hydro, PowerGen, Severn Trent, South West Water and Wessex Water. Most if not all of the companies that the Treasury sold shares in are vulnerable to Labour's windfall tax.

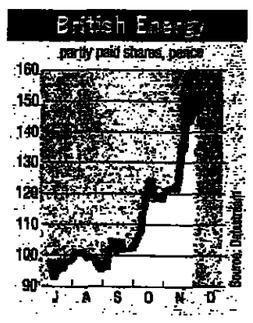
The proceeds from the sale of the Government's remaining stake in British Energy will come as a consolation to ministers after the way the original public offer flopped so badly last summer. The fully-paid shares were priced at just 203p – close to the bottom of the Government's target range, raising just £1.4bn for the taxpayer – some £500m short of earlier expectations. The first day of dealings turned into an unprecedented privatisation flop as the partly paid shares crashed by more than 10 per cent from their opening price of 100p.

Since then, however, the shares have recovered to be one of the best performing stocks on the market. Last night the shares closed unchanged at 147.5p – up 47.5p on their offer price 5 months ago.

The sharp rise in the share price has led to some mutterings that the company was sold too cheaply.

However, Government sources pointed to the fact that even at the rock bottom price of 203p it was still left with nearly 13 per cent of the company on its hands.

More than 600,000 private investors applied for shares, leaving the public offer 2.4 times subscribed and resulting in the allocation for small shareholders being raised from 30 to 43 per cent of the offer.



Racal moves to calm fears with news of £2bn link-up

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Racal Electronics yesterday sought to stem shareholder discontent after Monday's disastrous profits warning by announcing an agreement to join with a rival defence consortium to bid for a £2bn British army radio contract.

However Sir Ernest Harrison, the company's chairman, failed to discount speculation that he was considering retiring from the group he has managed for the past 30 years. Asked whether it was time for him to leave his job at the age of 70, he said: "The whole question of succession is always under review." He declined to be drawn further on any firm plans.

Sir Ernest was launching a fierce defence of his strategy after the profits warning on Monday which stunned investors and knocked 18 per cent off the company's share price. Describing Racal as a "super" company and a "tremendous success," he totally rejected accusations that the management had been wrong-footed by delays to contracts in its Radio Communications division. He continued: "The businesses are not going wrong, they are going well."

Directors also insisted that the first time they had heard about the problems with the contracts, which would be worth some £30m to Racal's sales this year, was at a scheduled board meeting last Friday. Sir Ernest said the radio business was "more supervised than any other activity in the company."

He revealed that Racal had agreed to team up with ITT Defence of the US to jointly bid for the £2bn Bowman contract to replace the British Army's battlefield radio system. Racal had been in partnership with Siemens Plessey in a team called "Yeoman" to bid for Bowman, billed as the largest UK military communications programme ever, with ITT as the remaining rival bidder left in the race.

However both Racal-Plessey and ITT have become increasingly frustrated at delays by the UK Government in placing the order. The Ministry of Defence recently announced that the production contract had slipped further, from 1998 to 1999.

A joint bid with ITT needs approval from the Ministry of Defence, though David Elsbury, Racal chief executive, pointed out that the Yeoman consortium had already spent £35m in research and development work. "It's difficult to be enthusiastic and support those R&D costs," he said.

However he claimed that a tie-up with ITT would give the combined operation more than two thirds of the global defence radio market, worth around £500m a year. If the MoD approves the link-up with ITT, it would go some way to restructuring Racal's radio division, which is currently the subject of a strategic review.

The news about Bowman helped Racal shares to recover a little of the ground they lost on Monday, rising 11p to 236p. They had closed at 275p last Friday.

Racal yesterday confirmed that its half-yearly profits had fallen by 30 per cent to £21.2m after a £10m charge for restructuring its Data products operations. The profits warning had earlier estimated that earnings for the year as a whole would be around £50m, compared with £70.4m in 1995.

However speculation that Sir Ernest is to retire would be likely to raise further doubts about Racal's long-term direction. He joined the company in 1951 as company secretary and financial accountant, gaining a seat on the board 10 years later and becoming chairman in 1966.

In the years that followed Sir Ernest became the acknowledged "king" of shareholder value, delighting investors with his demerger policy, which saw Vodafone and then Chubb, the security business, hived off into separate businesses.

After massive growth in the mobile phone market, Vodafone is now worth £7.9bn, while Chubb, with a market value of some £930m, is also worth more than what remains of Racal.

Singer makes City debut

Patrick Tooher

He has done for *Galway Bay* and *Danny Boy* what *Riverdance* did for jigs and reels, or Val Doonican achieved with sweaters.

Now Daniel O'Donnell, the squeaky-clean and hugely successful Irish singer, has hit the right note in the City.

The easy-listening star is by far the biggest selling artist at Ritz, the music publishing group whose shares start trading this morning on the lightly-regulated Ofex market.

A placing of 1 million shares at 55p values the company at just over £10m.

Michael Clerkin, the owner of Ritz who will retain a stake worth more than £7.5m, plans to pump the new cash into promoting other acts, which include country singers Charlie Landsborough, Mary Duff and Dominic Kirwan.

But it is Mr O'Donnell who is the main attraction. Some £200,000 is earmarked to double the spending on a pre-Christmas advertising blitz for his latest chart-topping album, "Songs Of Inspiration", and a live video.

Mr O'Donnell, who has monopolised the UK country music charts since the Eighties, has a fan club boasting 25,000 members and plays to sell-out crowds across Britain and Ireland. Devotion to Mr O'Donnell borders on the messianic.

Every year thousands flock to his home in the tiny Co Dongeal village of Kincasslagh, where Mr O'Donnell's mother greets well-wishers with cups of tea.

Recently a couple of fans left their home in Bristol and bought a caravan just to live near their idol.

They have seen him on stage 40 times and made 30 trips to Donegal.

Founded 15 years ago, Ritz's first big hit came in 1982 when Foster & Allen, an unknown duo, made the top 20 singles chart with *A Bunch of Thyme*.

Directors are forecasting profits of £525,000 on sales of £5.7m for the year to March 1997.

Gilts clearing system delayed

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

The Bank of England has delayed a much-improved clearing system for the gilts market from spring to late August 1997, because of the pressure put on City resources by the problems getting the Crest share settlement system up and running. The new gilts settlement system will use Crest software.

As a result of the delay, a new City market in "stripped" gilts, where the interest and principal are traded separately, will be delayed until the start of the upgraded gilts clearing system.

However, a Budget tax concession linked directly to the new strips market will take effect on 7 June, despite the delay in starting the upgraded gilts settlement system.

The Treasury concession allows all interest payments on gilts to be made gross, without tax deducted at source. This payment of interest gross is essential for the new strips market to operate.

The Bank of England said it was intended to keep open the option of merging the settlement systems for gilts and shares in future, once they were fully up and running. The Bank set up Crest, though it handed it over to a large group of City shareholders. As a first step, the two settlement systems are to use the same networks, Syntegra and Swift.

Meanwhile, Crest and the Bank are sharing information about the improvements being introduced to the new share settlement system in the light of experience with commissioning.

Crest is the first fully computerised share settlement system, and is gradually taking over from the Stock Exchange's old Talisman settlement operation.

Teething problems caused an outcry among brokers. The Crest system was on the brink of a crisis last month as pressure grew to suspend its commissioning because of delays in operation.

But a Crest board meeting last week decided to stick to the previously planned date of next April for full commissioning.

Profit warning puts Dorling shares into dive

Magnus Grimond

Dorling Kindersley, the books to CD-Rom publishing group, saw £60m wiped off its stock market value yesterday after warning that profits would be hit by the current strength of the pound and a soft US books market.

Peter Kindersley, chairman and chief executive, told shareholders at the company's annual meeting that sterling's 9 per cent appreciation since September would cut sales by £5m and pre-tax profits by £1.6m if sustained throughout the rest of the financial year to next June.

The warning sent the group's highly-rated shares, which peaked at 645p in May, plunging to 420p at one stage yesterday, although they later rallied to end 82.5p down at 436p. Three years ago, Dorling saw its shares dive by around 100p after it said problems with a distributor would hit profits.

Yesterday's warning is just the latest in a series from British companies forecasting that their export business or the translation of overseas earnings would be hit by the pound's rise. Yesterday Siebe, Britain's biggest engineering group, said its half year profits of £190m would have been around £9m lower if translated at current exchange rates.

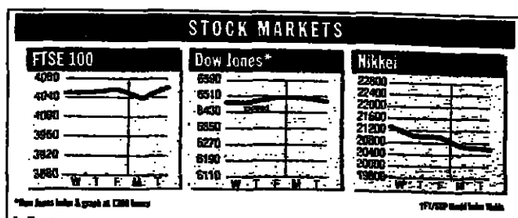
Around 40 per cent of Dorling's sales are in the US. Although the group is establishing a sales force across the Atlantic, the group's costs are predominantly determined in sterling, so it will be squeezed if the dollar continues to be weak against the pound.

The problem is being compounded in the US by a highly competitive and sluggish book retailing market, where the group has been expanding for the past two years, and difficult trading in CD-Roms.

Rod Hare, managing director said big publishers like Random House and HarperCollins had also been complaining recently of flat markets across the Atlantic, along with increasing levels of book returns. He believed it would be a short-term problem as retailers reviewed their stocks to obtain the highest margins. CD-Roms were no worse than expected, he said, but there continued to be heavy competition for shelf space, while many retailers had gone into Chapter 11 insolvency.

Analysts cut their forecasts from around £20m to between £18m and £18.5m yesterday to take account of the problems. Lorna Tilbian of brokers Panmure Gordon agreed the difficulties were short-term and suggested this was a buying opportunity for the shares.

STOCK MARKETS



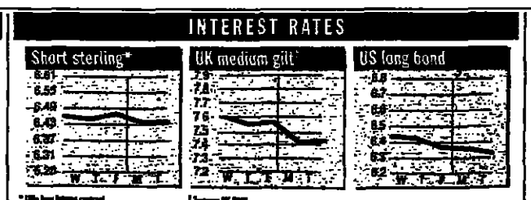
*New Jones Index & graph at 12noon hours
FT/ISE Real Time Index

Indices

Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996 High	1996 Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	4061.50	+23.00	+0.6	4073.10	3632.30	3.91
FTSE 250	4427.60	+12.80	+0.3	4568.80	4015.30	3.55
FTSE 350	2015.40	+10.20	+0.5	2022.10	1816.60	3.84
FTSE SmallCap	2161.29	+1.33	+0.1	2244.36	1954.06	3.19
FTSE All-Share	1986.29	+9.40	+0.5	1994.54	1791.95	3.79
New York *	6506.42	-15.28	-0.2	6547.79	5032.94	2.01
Tokyo	20630.56	-44.13	-0.2	22666.60	19734.70	0.78†
Hong Kong	13456.26	-61.30	-0.5	13530.95	10204.87	3.05†
Frankfurt	2886.98	+28.38	+1.0	2886.98	2253.36	1.61†

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES



* 10bn Dem futures contract
† January 26 1996

Money Market Rates

Index	1 Month	1 Year
UK	6.06	6.88
US	5.47	5.53
Japan	0.34	0.50
Germany	3.25	3.17

Bond Yields*

Market Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	(%) Year Ago
6.03	7.52	6.88	7.68
6.02	5.64	6.32	6.03
2.38	2.66	-	-
5.62	6.09	6.53	-

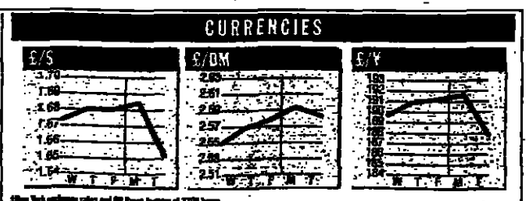
*Benchmark indices

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change(%)
Racal Electronics	236	11	4.9
Wimpey(George)	128	4.5	3.6
Barratt Devel	238	8	3.5

Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
Dorling Kindersley	437.5	81	15.6
Lucas Varity	234	16.5	6.6
Kwik-fit Holdings	217.5	5.5	2.5

CURRENCIES



Other Non-London exchange rates and Gilt Boom Bunny at 12noon hours

Pound

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
$ (London)	1.6520	-3.27c	1.5345
$ (N York)‡	1.6735	-0.75	1.5334
DM (London)	2.5879	-1.05pf	2.2051
¥ (London)	187.882	-3.803	154.927
£ Index	93.7	-0.8	82.6

Dollar

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	0.6053	+1.17	0.6518
£ (N York)‡	0.5976	unch	0.6521
DM (London)	1.5665	+2.41pf	1.4361
¥ (London)	113.730	-¥0.05	101.935
$ Index	98.2	+0.6	94.9

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago
Oil Brent $	23.49	+0.69	17.38
Gold $	367.00	-3.65	386.30
Gold £	222.15	+2.02	251.91

	Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Figs
RPI	153.8	+2.7pc	149.7	12 Dec
GDP	106.9	+2.3pc	105.7	Jan 27
Base Rates	—	6.00pc	6.75	—

Sterling's stumble signals end of its glory days

COMMENT

'So what is going on here? Certainly it was not concern on the part of the Government that caused sterling to falter. If there was anxiety at the Treasury and the Bank of England about the strength of the pound, it hasn't showed'

Has the pound finally reached its high point? There was certainly reason to think this yesterday as sterling took a tumble in foreign exchange markets. Perhaps significantly, there was no particular reason for it, other than that dealers thought the pound's recent rise could no longer be sustained. So perhaps we are not, after all, looking at the great sea change hailed by some in the pound's standing - sterling as a safe haven, the next Swiss franc, and all that.

So what is going on here? Certainly it was not concern on the part of the Government that caused sterling to falter. If there was anxiety at the Treasury and the Bank of England about the strength of the pound, it hasn't showed. So far, there has been no intervention by the Bank of England in foreign exchange markets, nor has there been much comment from the Chancellor.

When you think about it, however, there is no earthly reason why he should be concerned. In the short to medium term, a strong pound is all to the good, politically at least. For a start, it means cheaper foreign holidays. Then there's that sense of national pride that springs from a strong currency. More important still, the deflationary effect decreases the pressure on Mr Clarke to raise interest rates.

The only people complaining about it were exporters. If they get hurt, then plainly that eventually affects the real economy and the Government. But there is a relatively long lag here and it seems unlikely there would be any noticeable adverse effect in the six months left to an election. The upshot is that there is no incentive at all for Mr Clarke to do anything about a strong pound.

Moreover, there is good reason to believe that it is in any case only a temporary phenomenon. The pound is not made inherently attractive just because the Germans seem prepared to give up their strong D-mark for a softer and more volatile Euro. Meanwhile there are problems aplenty building up in the domestic economy, most urgently that of runaway consumer demand. This looks destined to bring higher interest rates with or without the strong pound. Anyone who believes the picture is going to look any better under Mr Blair is whistling in the wind; Labour is going to find it much harder to hold the lid on spending while big tax increases to correct the problem are going to be as difficult for Mr Blair as they are for Mr Clarke - they would risk strangling the new administration at birth. This is not a backdrop conducive to a strong currency of Swiss like predictability and resilience.

Another bungle on insider dealing

Whoops. Another one bungled. The Stock Exchange typically refers two or three dozen cases of suspected insider dealing a year to securities regulators. But convictions are still as rare as summer snow. Most of them never even get to court. This year there has been a grand total of two trials, one of which fizzled out yesterday with a hung jury. Amazingly the other produced a guilty verdict, though we do not yet know the sentence but it hardly makes much difference.

Over the years, criminal prosecutions for insider dealing have produced a lamentable record of which neither legislators nor prosecutors can be proud. The law was beefed up in 1993, but few believe that this will do much good. This is an issue that is giving ethical standards in the City a bad name, and deservedly so. As a result, there has been much hand wringing among regulators over what to do next.

The problem is that a large number of what we can only call professional insider dealers gets away scot free every year - simply because they are so good at their egregious calling. It is the occasional amateur that tends to get caught and fined.

The mystery about it is that the DTI has powers to investigate insider dealing that go far beyond those available to the police in the ordinary course of their investigations. Inspectors can trample over what are normally regarded as core civil liberties with impunity. Karen Morgan Thomas, a former stockbroker at James Capel, who was innocently caught up - through her acquaintance with Lord Archer - in investigations into insider trading in Anglia TV shares is so incensed about her treatment that she is reportedly planning to take the issue to the European courts.

This DTI tiger, which looks on paper as if it can give anybody a mauling, looks more like a kitten when you look at the record of court success, and the paltry level of penalties, with only one jailing in a decade. The conventional answer, favoured by the Stock Exchange, is to use the civil law and the regulatory system, where the burden of proof is lower, to prosecute insider trading. Reluctantly, it has to be said that the criminal prosecution record is making the exchange's case stronger every year.

Mr Rice needs to keep on running

Victor Rice, the chief executive of LucasVarity, is a larger than life character so he should be able to take yesterday's rather perverse 6 per cent decline in the company's share price in his stride. Any man who can wear pink jogging pants into the office isn't the sort to lose much sleep over one or two stock market downgrades anyway.

The cause of the slippage in the share price was some bearish comments about the trading outlook that the usually bullish Mr Rice made at the end of a teleconference with analysts. Apparently the French have stopped buying so many diesel engined cars now that their Government has stopped bribing them to enter the showrooms.

The bigger picture is somewhat rosier, however. Poor old Sir Brian Pearse, the group's non-exec chairman, could only spout £65m worth of cost savings in the merged business. Moreover, he gave his word as a decent chap and an ex-banker that the job losses would be few and far between such was the complementary match between the two businesses.

But the sharp-suited Mr Rice is an altogether smarter cookie. He has managed, surprise, surprise, to double the figure for cost savings to £120m after identifying 1,500 folk on the Lucas payroll who were surplus to requirements after all. In total the headcount will fall by some 8,000 once Mr Rice has finished swinging the axe elsewhere in the sleepy old world of car components and disposed of some 13 businesses (again all ex-Lucas subsidiaries) that do not fit with the grand strategy.

Perhaps we should not be too surprised at all this. Mr Rice was brought in from Varity to do precisely this job and he has set about his task with gusto. Any pretence that this was other than an American takeover of Lucas has been firmly squashed

The kitchen sink exercise will mean £250m of exceptional charges this year. But the flip side is that all the cost savings identified by Mr Rice will be flowing through to shareholders inside two years.

That, generally, is when mergers of this sort start to run into the ground and investors start to worry. Mr Rice will need to keep his jogging pants on.

LucasVarity to cut 1,500 jobs in Britain

Michael Harrison

Up to 1,500 jobs are to be shed in Britain as part of a sweeping cost reduction programme unveiled yesterday by the newly merged automotive and aerospace group LucasVarity.

The job cuts are part of a rationalisation plan that will see a total of 3,000 redundancies worldwide and the disposal of a further 13 businesses employing some 5,000 people.

LucasVarity is taking a one-off charge of £250m to cover the restructuring programme but said that by January 1999 it expected to be making annual savings in operating costs of at least £120m.

The City initially greeted the news positively, marking LucasVarity shares up sharply. But they fell later in the day as dealers construed comments about weakening European demand by the group's chief executive, Victor Rice, as a veiled profits warning.

Mr Rice described the City's reaction as "dumb and stupid" and denied he had issued a profits warning. All he had said to analysts during a telephone conference call was that the group's heavy-duty braking, Perkins engines and diesel fuel injection businesses had seen a slowdown in European markets.

The cost savings identified by LucasVarity are double those estimated at the time the merger was announced in September, and will come from increased productivity, the elimination of duplicated facilities and reduced overheads.

Sir Brian Pearse, Lucas's chairman, had also indicated that job losses would be few. In the event, the rationalisation programme will see the combined workforce fall from 55,000 to 47,000.

All 13 businesses being sold off are former Lucas subsidiaries. Mr Rice said the disposal programme would raise £100m at a conservative estimate and would be earnings enhancing.

The businesses being sold have sales of £270m, representing 6 per cent of group turnover. Eight businesses have so far been identified for sale. They include two UK subsidiaries – Lucas Heavy Duty Products, which makes starters and alternators, and Lucas Industrial Components, which manufactures precision machined components – and two businesses with UK operations – Lucas Nitrotec, which specialises in metal surface treatment, and Lucas Assembly & Test Systems, which is based in Britain and the US.

The other businesses being disposed of are its Brazilian headlamp division, its Argentinian starter motor and ignition systems business, its South African starter motor and alternator subsidiary and a Greek parts importer and distributor.

Mr Rice said there was no question of selling the Lucas aerospace business, saying the combined group intended to establish leading positions in four key markets – automotive, diesel engines, aftermarket and aerospace.

He indicated, however, that Lucas's troubled US aerospace subsidiary GDS, which was the subject of a multi-million dollar settlement with the Pentagon over falsified records, might be got rid off. Speculation that it might close Lucas's Koblenz brakes plant in Germany and Varity's Dayton Walther brakes and wheels business in the US was wrong, he said.

At the time of the merger, LucasVarity said it expected to achieve £65m in cost savings and a further £65m in tax savings over a two-year period. Of the £120m it now expects to save through greater operational efficiency, £60m to £70m will come through in the first year.

The £250m exceptional charge breaks down into £120m to cover redundancies and a one-off non-cash item of £130m, primarily to cover asset writedowns.

There would be no plant closures in the UK, although it was bearing the brunt of the job cuts, said Mr Rice. He defended the heavier-than-expected job losses, saying the forecasts were made when Lucas and Varity were still virtually separate companies, before its "transition teams" had got to work.

Victor Rice: Denied he had made a veiled profits warning Photograph: FT

US rivals team up on super jumbo

David Usborne
New York

Boeing reached an agreement with McDonnell Douglas yesterday to collaborate on the development of future Boeing wide-body commercial airliners, marking a highly unusual coming together of deadly rivals.

Under the pact, which will be finalised in January, McDonnell Douglas is expected to loan several hundred of its employees to Boeing to assist with the design and testing of the proposed new models. The joint teams will work initially on the development of a new super-sized Boeing 747 jumbo jet.

The deal will help Boeing get through a capacity and manpower crunch brought about by a recent inrush of new aircraft orders. McDonnell Douglas, by contrast, has suffered setbacks in its commercial jet division and will welcome a new outlet for its workforce and expertise.

"We have a record number of orders for commercial jets and several ongoing development programmes," Ron Woodward, president of Boeing's Commercial Airplane Group, said. "McDonnell Douglas has excellent design and production capability, both in people and facilities, that are not being fully utilised. We look forward to applying those resources to future Boeing wide-body airplane programmes."

The agreement is likely to spur speculation about the possibility in the longer run of an eventual buy-out by Boeing of McDonnell Douglas's commercial division. McDonnell Douglas faces an uphill struggle persuading its traditional customers that it can survive as a maker of civilian aircraft. It recently shelved plans for the development of a successor to its wide-body MD-11 airliner that had been dubbed the MD-XX.

News of the collaboration deal nudged up the stock of both companies in early New York trading, with Boeing shares rising 50c to $98 and McDonnell shares gaining 75c to $53.375.

IN BRIEF

• **Troubled French state bank** Credit Lyonnais has become the subject of a criminal investigation by the Paris Public Prosecutor, who is looking into suspected fraud and the issuing of misleading information in the early 1990s. The move was prompted by the finance minister, Jean Arthuis, who asked that legal proceedings be taken against former top managers at the bank. Credit Lyonnais made losses of $4bn in 1992-94.

• **Germany's trade surplus** grew to DM8.3bn (£3.2bn) in September from DM8.1bn in August, according to provisional figures from the Federal Statistics Office. The provisional current account deficit narrowed to DM1.6bn in September from an unrevised DM4.6bn in August. Industrial output in Germany fell a seasonally adjusted 1.8 per cent in October from September but, adjusted for the number of working days, was up 0.7 per cent from a year earlier, the Economics Ministry said.

• **Cable & Wireless** will bid with still-unnamed partners to build a second full telecommunications network in Singapore. C&W said yesterday that talks were still going on with potential partners. In 1998 Singapore will award up to two additional full service licences, breaking Singapore Telecommunication's monopoly.

• **BT and MCI**, the US long-distance phone company, formally filed their merger application with the US regulator, the Federal Communications Commission. It aims to demonstrate that the UK phone market is one of the world's most competitive, answering the main FCC pre-condition to giving the deal the go-ahead. The US authorities will only approve the merger if they are convinced other US firms will have the same access to the UK market as BT will gain in America.

• **Kenwood**, the electrical appliances group under siege from rebel shareholders, yesterday played down bid speculation as it revealed a sharp drop in profits. The company said it had noted reports of an interest from rival household goods group Pifco, but no formal offer had been made. Pre-tax profits in the first half fell to £3.3m from £7.4 m.

• **The BSE scare** on beef knocked £2.5m off profits at Hazlewood Foods in the six months to September. Hardest hit was the group's delicatessen and meat division, which slumped to a £2m loss. The group is withdrawing from the commodity end of the cooked meat business and says further cost reductions will take place in the second half. Group profits fell from £16m to £11m, including a £4.7m loss on the disposal of Charles Turner, the recycled paper business.

• **UK official reserves** fell an underlying $98m in November following a $7m rise in October, the Treasury said. The overall level of official reserves fell by $116m in November, bringing the end-November reserves to $46.569bn.

• **Candover Investments** has backed the management buy-out of Camden Motors from Barclays Bank. The majority of the equity finance was provided by Candover Investments and funds under its management, with the management team, led by managing director Paul Dunkley, providing the remaining equity. Camden is the 15th largest motor retailer in the UK and operates a multi-franchise network.

• **Financial Times Information**, a subsidiary of Pearson, is to co-develop a global news service for corporate, research, government and academic customers with Dow Jones Information Publishing and Knight-Ridder Information. The London-based online news service will contain information from the major newspapers, news magazines and trade publications worldwide.

Ernst partner earns £430,000

Roger Trapp

Nick Land, UK senior partner of Ernst & Young, was paid a total of nearly £430,000 in the year to June 1996, according to the accountancy and management consultancy firm's first published report and accounts.

The figures issued yesterday also show the practice's profits rose 21 per cent to £75.2m, while gross fee income rose 14 per cent to £456m. At the same time, the international firm announced worldwide revenues up 13 per cent to $7.8bn (£4.8bn) for the year to 30 September.

Mr Land's package was made up of remuneration of £326,701, a pension contribution of £74,712 and interest on his partnership capital of £25,513. The average partner's total pay was £200,000, comprising £154,000 in remuneration, pension contributions of £35,000 and interest on capital of £11,000.

This figure was broadly similar to the amount reported for KPMG partners when that firm published its accounts earlier this year as part of its move to incorporate its audit arm. But Mr Land's pay package is dwarfed by KPMG senior partner Colin Sharman's £740,000.

Though all sectors of the business had done well, corporate finance, which grew by a fifth, management consultancy and taxation had been especially strong.

Pointing out that partnership profits had actually dipped last year, to £171,000 per partner from the previous year's £177,000, Mr Land attributed the record growth to "improved market conditions and the results of a sustained process of change over the last four years".

Ernst & Young is not required to publish detailed financial information, but Mr Land said disclosure fitted in with the firm's spirit of openness.

Football clubs 'could bypass Sky'

Patrick Tooher

Two leading television executives yesterday predicted the eclipse of broadcasters such as BSkyB and sports bodies such as the Premier League by top football clubs. They warned that the top clubs, which owned valuable rights to screen live games, could cut exclusive pay-per-view television deals.

Greg Dyke, chief executive of Pearson Television, claimed next year's planned introduction of digital television and the soaring value of sports rights would bring "untold riches" to clubs such as Manchester United at the expense of programme distributors.

Speaking at a seminar in London on the business of sport organised by the Institute of Economic Affairs, Mr Dyke said: "It is the clubs who own the rights who will gain, not the broadcasters. This is not television as we know it. The new television will be an extension of the gate, the club selling to the fans."

Mr Dyke attacked the hitherto dominant role played by BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster which recently agreed a £670m deal with the Premier League to retain exclusive rights to televise top football matches into the next century.

Greg Dyke: Attacked the dominant role of BSkyB

"BSkyB has made an enormous amount of money by being a monopoly supplier of somebody else's market. But it is an interim service using interim technology."

Mr Dyke's comments were backed up by Robin Welch, a leading figure at Dutch pay-TV group NetHold, who last week became a non-executive director of Caspian, the media group which owns Premier League club Leeds United.

"Sports distributors will have less of an influence in the digital era," Mr Welch said.

The outspoken comments of two senior industry figures come as leading football clubs continue to prepare for the early introduction of pay-per-view, which is not scheduled under the BSkyB/Premier League contract until 1999.

This week it emerged that Rick Parry was quitting as Premier League chief executive to take up a similar post at Liverpool in a move widely seen as increasing the Anfield's club bargaining power in future pay-per-view negotiations.

BSkyB is also keen to offer pay-per-view Premier League football to coincide with the launch of up to 200 digital channels next year, about 60 of which will be pay-per-view sport or films. But clubs could be free to sign their own pay-per-view deals if the Restrictive Practices Court decides BSkyB's exclusive television contract with the Premier League is illegal.

Wickes to stop expansion abroad

Nigel Cope

Wickes, the troubled DIY group, is expected to abandon its overseas operations as part of a business plan that will be unveiled in the group's rescue rights issue prospectus next week.

The decision to concentrate solely on the UK will mark the end of former chairman Henry Sweetbaum's international ambitions, which saw the company open stores in South Africa, Belgium, France and Holland as well as a conservatory business in the US.

Last year's annual report contained a statement by Mr Sweetbaum which boasted of his belief that the "opportunity exists to develop the Wickes concept around the world".

It is expected that these operations will be sold to concentrate on the 120 UK stores. Wickes has 21 stores in Holland, 19 in Belgium, three in South Africa and two in France.

Next week's document will also include the restated 1995 accounts, the results for the first six months of 1996 and a trading forecast for the rest of this year.

It is likely the group will confirm it has completed negotiations with suppliers on new terms. These are likely to cause additional provisions, which is one reason why the rights issue figure has been increased from £30m to £50m. A new non-executive director will also be announced.

The rights issue document will alert possible bidders to pore over the figures for Wickes, which include Ready Mixed Concrete and Kingfisher, which will report booming third-quarter sales figures at its B&Q DIY subsidiary today.

Analysts think the buoyant DIY market and the possibility of takeover action will prove persuasive to investors. "I think people will grumble, but cough up the cash," says Nick Bubb at Mees Pierson.

market report / shares

Data Bank

FTSE 100
4061.5 +23.0
FTSE 250
4427.6 +12.8
FTSE 350
2015.4 +10.2
SEAQ VOLUME
847.3m shares,
35,507 bargains
Gilts Index
95.48 -0.15

Share spotlight

Ladbroke places its bets on the US casino market

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Hopes of a US betting bonanza are beginning to inspire the **Ladbroke** bookmaking and hotel group, which was once viewed as a dead cert takeover victim. The shares climbed 4.5p to 208p as the stock market punted on the group's multi-million pound push into the fiercely competitive American casino business.

Ladbroke, it would appear, wants to set up casinos throughout the US, many in partnership with its new ally, Hilton Hotels Corporation. First joint venture will almost certainly be in Las Vegas.

For a long while Ladbroke was seen as a likely takeover victim. HHC was just one of many predators bandied around. With Ladbroke it shares the world-famous Hilton hotel name; the UK group owns the international franchise and HHC the US operation. The betting and hotels chain was also seen as bid fodder for the likes of **Bass** and a variety of international leisure groups.

Ladbroke was able to outrun the speculation and in August agreed a collaboration deal with Hilton which gave it the opportunity to participate in HHC's US gaming operations.

Bass, up 17p at 811p, is due to roll out results today. They could be accompanied by the Government's reaction to its controversial bid to buy control of Carlsberg Tetley, the struggling brewer. The view is that to get the deal through Bass could be forced to make big concessions, selling off chunks of its pub estate. One possible buyer is Michael Cannon, who recently sold The Magic Pub Co to brewer Greene King for £197.5m.

The rest of the stock market adopted a more aggressive approach, with Footsie up 23 points at 4,061.5 and the supporting indices on the uproad.

The Government's utilities raid was the centre of interest. **British Energy** held at 147.5p as, through HSBC James Capel, Westminster unloaded 81 million shares at 146p. Other unwanted Government utility rumps were sold, helping inflate what was a rather mundane day's turnover. Severn Trent used the Westminster sale as an opportunity for a buyback, picking up 2.5 million shares from ABN Amro Hoare Govett which had acquired the stock from the Government. Hoare sold on the shares at 661p against a 668.5p closing price.

Associated British Foods gained 6.5p to 452p. A special dividend from its Australian off-shoot prompted the interest.

LucasVarity was the worst-performing blue chip, suffering a 16.5p fall to 234p as it provided details of its restructuring which carried an implied profit warning.

Racal Electronics managed to survive its profit setback with an 11p gain to 236p and **Pilkington**, the glass group, continued its recovery, firming to 153p.

Oils were buoyed by the Santa Fe North Sea deal. Norway's largest independent oil group, Saga, is paying $1.23bn for the Kuwaiti group's North Seas interests. Such a deal clearly casts a beneficial light on other North Sea assets. But, the old adage it is better to travel than arrive was again evident with the likes of British Petroleum, Enterprise Oil and Lasmo giving ground.

Dorling Kindersley provided the shock of the day, citing the strength of the pound for a profits warning. The shares slumped 81p to 437.5p, dragging down such groups as **Pearson**, off 8.5p to 729p.

House of Fraser, the department stores chain, was drawn back into the takeover spotlight, gaining 4p to 166p.

Barcom, a coal services and plant hire group, gained 3p to 52.5p as it pushed profits to £2.71m from £652,000. The group has been reshaped by Doug Rogers, no stranger to turn-around situations.

Rage Software, the computer games group which used to be called BCE, held at 11.25p. A long-standing shareholder, Rose Noble, has lowered its interest and now has nearly 24 million shares, 9.84 per cent of the capital. Rage has indicated it is in talks with publishers and there are stories it could forge a link with Virgin. The shares were 23p a year ago.

Trocadero, the London leisure complex, held at 51p. Some believe this Burford spin-off could be the subject of a Japanese bid.

Bruntcliffe Aggregates was another drawn into bid speculation. There are stories the company, which has been haunted by a threatened boarding party, could have attracted the attention of Bardon, itself a long-standing bid target. The shares rose 2p to 25.5p. Takeover hopes lifted **Lamont**, a textile group, 5p to 191p.

Lorien, a personnel group, is launching a £18.5m placing and open offer. It is paying £14.5 for two resourcing companies. The shares held at 344p.

Taking Stock

☐ Chieftain, an insulation supplier, firmed 5p to 57.5p, its highest for a long while. There is talk bid action could soon materialise.

The group, after a difficult run, is now trading well and interim profits suggested it was well on its way to hitting £500,000 for the year, which would represent a £1m-plus swing. The shares were 18p in January.

☐ CNC, a property group, is another which could be destined for bid action. The shares held at 7.25p, although there is talk the company has received and rejected a bid at 9.5p.

The group used to be a confectionery maker called Clarke Nickolls Coombs. It moved into property, changing its name after winning control of Brightstone Properties in a £9.2m deal.

Alcoholic Beverages

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
559	419	Allied Domecq	445x	+10	6.8	13.4	1550
625	477	Bulmer(HP)	542½	-	3.0	18.2	2005
131	67½	Burn Stewart	71	-	6.0	75.5	1518
655	615	Glenmorangie	647½	-	1.8	28.0	3257
496	411	Grand Met	460	-4	4.1	19.5	2759
493	430	Guinness	454½	+10	4.2	14.1	2791
378	315	Highland D	337½	x	3.1	18.3	2890
879½	803½	Kirin	803½	-	1.0	23.0	1119
603	357½	Matthew Clk	285	-2½	10.5	13.6	2153
141	91½	Merrydown	95	+2½	6.2	12.5	3352
24⁹⁄₁₆	20⅞	Seagrams	£24⅛	-⅛	1.2	-	-

Banks, Merchant

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
482	380	Cater Allen	380	+1½	10.1	14.6	3081
392	307½	Close Bros	323½	-	3.9	13.0	2186
472	260	Gerrard&Nat	270	x	10.8	11.0	2885
267½	195	Hambros	238	x2½	3.9	20.2	2812
197	143	King & Shaxson	182½	x	6.2	15.9	3086
465	405	Leopold J	465	-	5.2	18.8	3080
67	49½	Rea Bros	60½	-	2.1	23.8	3785
1537½	1185	Schroders	1537½	+5	1.4	17.5	3839
135	98½	Singer &Fried	128½	+1½	4.1	9.4	4028
115½	85½	Union	88½	-	4.0	10.0	4363
360	266	Wintrust	317½	-	4.8	16.8	4524

Telecommunications

1996 High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Index Code
365	328½	BT	361	+3½	5.4	11.8	1525
504	397	Cable & Wis	474	x+2½	2.7	17.4	2038
138	100½	HK Telecom	108½	+2½	4.0	-	4823
38⅝	26⅞	NYNEX	£27⅝	-⅛	5.1		4740
254	169	Orange	177	+1			3138
318	243	Securicor	288	+½	0.2		
180	118	TeleWest	121	+½	-	-	1648
265½	209½	Vodafone	254½	x2	2.2	23.1	5555

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: r Ex rights x Ex-dividend a Ex all u Unlisted Securities Market s Suspended pp Partly Paid pm Nil Paid Shares. ‡ AIM Stock Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

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FTSE 100 – Real-time	00	Sterling Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	36
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	39
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	20	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	21	High Street Banks	41

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Calls cost 50p per minute (daytime), 45p per minute at all other times. Call charges include

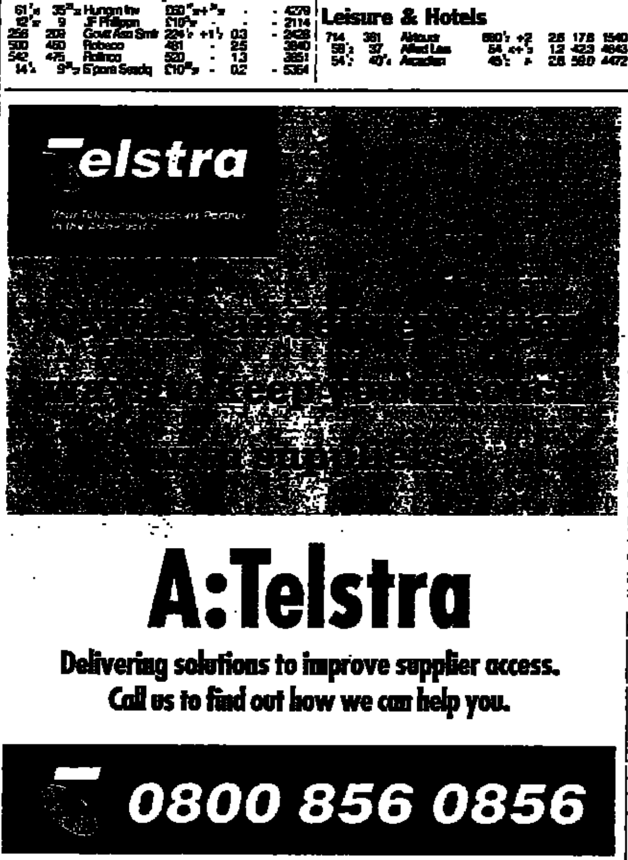
Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000
British Energy	103100.00	Caradon	13400.00	Scot. Hydro.	8500.00	Lloyds TSB	7300.00
LucasVarity	30300.00	Pilkington	10900.00	BT	8000.00	Severn Trent	6800.00
Scottish Power	25800.00	Burton	9700.00	British Steel	8000.00	BAT Inds.	5300.00
BTR	14000.00	Racal	9400.00	Hanson	7700.00	Railtrack	5300.00
Sears	13900.00	National Grid	9300.00	Gen. Accident	7300.00	BP	5100.00

FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 4043.4 up 4.9	11.00 4055.5 up 17.0	14.00 4063.3 up 24.8
09.00 4053.3 up 14.8	12.00 4057.6 up 19.1	15.00 4059.8 up 21.3
10.00 4057.3 up 18.8	13.00 4060.0 up 21.5	16.00 4063.2 up 24.7
		Close 4061.5 up 23.0

Government Securities



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Superb management skills push Siebe profits higher

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Siebe, Britain's biggest engineering group, has proved its management skills in spades over the past few years and has also shown it is no slouch at acquisitions. This year's £520m deal to buy electronic controls group Unitech is already proving well up with expectations.

A substantial chunk of the 32 per cent rise in profits to £190m for the six months to September was the result of a maiden five-month contribution from Unitech. The power supply converter group chipped in £21.3m to group operating profits, which rose from £166m to £216m in the period. Unitech's underlying 12 per cent rise was impressive against the background of a still-depressed semiconductor industry, which, with telecoms, accounts for around a fifth of sales.

Siebe believes the electronics market is at last on the turn, although it may take 18 months to return to the heady days before last year's collapse in prices. Any further damage to sales caused by the weak yen should be more than made up with synergy benefits and cost savings, still on course to deliver £15m in a full year, with close to 1,200 people expected to be taken out of the business this year.

Meanwhile, Foxboro, an earlier purchase, continues to sparkle. Its I/A process control systems for managing large plants such as oil refineries and chemical plants has seen its market share more than double this decade and now stands just one percentage point behind market leader Honeywell.

But the real story at Siebe remains management. Having built world-beating positions in industrial and consumer appliance control equipment, sales have grown ahead of the market, which, combined with relentless cost-cutting, has pushed group margins from 13.8 to 14.7 per cent in the six months.

Bettering that will be tough, but Siebe is rolling out an ambitious and pioneering project, dubbed Six Sigma, to slash manufacturing defects from typical levels of 5,000 per million units of output to little more than zero. This US concept, already being used by Motorola and Texas Instruments, could deliver net benefits of around £50m in two to three years' time.

Apart from Europe, most of Siebe's markets are growing, with the controls business alone quoting for business worth £1bn. The only cloud is the potential translation impact of a strong pound, but on unchanged forecasts of £430m for the full year, the shares, up 10p at 950p, deserve their forward rating of 18. A firm hold.

Wessex shares remain steady

Wessex Water's interim results yesterday seemed strangely low key after its two-way struggle to take over neighbouring South West Water earlier in the year. With Wessex and rival bidder Severn Trent now effectively prevented by the Government from ever buying rivals, the question on shareholders' minds was what the water groups would do with their cash mountains. Severn Trent led the way yesterday, buying back 10 per cent of its shares. However, in typically conservative fashion, Wessex Water, which has net cash in the bank of £75m, said it had still not made up its mind how to hand back money to investors.

Reading between the lines, the likelihood is that there will be some kind of buyback or special dividend, coupled with earnings-enhancing acquisitions in the unregulated waste management businesses before next spring. But shareholders will have to wait for the details.

In the meantime, yesterday's half-yearly results were pretty much what analysts had expected, emphasising the stock's enduring quality as an uninspiring "hold". Pre-tax profits in the six months to the end of September rose by 10.4 per cent to £75.5m, while turnover increased by a strong 7.1 per cent to £128.9m. However earnings from Wessex's 50 per cent owned waste management operation grew by just £0.2m to £6.2m after a collapse in prices of recycled paper. The 14 per cent rise in the interim dividend to 5.7p was at the lower end of the range for recent water company announcements.

Profits for the full year should reach £144m and be accompanied by a 14 per cent rise in total dividends to 17.3p, giving a forward yield of 6.1 per cent, with the shares down 1.5p at 352.5p. There should be organic growth in the waste business, but investors should look elsewhere for real excitement.

Siebe: at a glance

Market value: £4.49bn, share price 950p

Trading record 1994 1995 1996 1995-1996 (six mos)

Share price (pence) 1100 1000 900 800 700 600 500 400 300 200 1992 93 94 95 96

Source: Datastream

Marston faces three problems

Marston, Thompson & Evershed had a reputation as a steady regional brewer until its surprise purchase of the trendy Pitcher & Piano bar chain in the summer. The £20m price tag, which worked out at £2.2m per outlet including development costs, had analysts spluttering in their pints.

Yesterday's results were the first to include a contribution from the purchase, although group profits just edged ahead 5 per cent to £14.7m in the six months to September.

There are eight Pitcher & Piano outlets, with 11 to open next year and 15 more in each of the following two years. Management says the chain is trading ahead of expectations, with like-for-like sales 16 per cent ahead, driven by better margins and tight cost controls.

But making the Pitcher & Piano deal pay its way is just one of Marston's problems. Its core Pedigree cask ale has been hit by the decline in the sector caused by the rise in popularity of the smooth and creamy nitrokeg beers such as Caffrey's and John Smith's Extra Smooth. Pedigree's volumes were down by 8 per cent in the period in a sector off 10 per cent. Pedigree's own nitrokeg version, Bitter Smooth Brewed, has only partly limited the damage. Sales of Pedigree's Draughtflow cans have also suffered.

There also seems to be a problem in the managed part of Marston's pubs estate, where like-for-like profits grew by only 1.9 per cent against the 7 to 8 per cent being enjoyed by the brewing majors.

Marston's shares have fallen sharply since their 352p high in May. Down a further 5.5p at 276.5p yesterday, and with analysts forecasting full-year profits of £28.6m, they trade on a forward rating of 12. A justified discount to the sector.

US fad wafts in like a breath of stale smoke

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

Peter Rosengard, the life assurance salesman who founded the Comedy Store in London, is at it again. This time he's founded what he claims is the capital's first cigar-smoking club, called The Havana Room.

The idea comes from the US, where all sorts of Hollywood starlets have decided that cigars are for the young and hip, rather than just the old and rich.

Mr Rosengard says he held a party at the trendy Soho club Groucho's last week to launch The Havana Room. "We flew in a cigar roller from Cuba called Carlos for the occasion," he says.

"We auctioned the first cigar he rolled, and it went for £500. Then we decided to give the money to Carlos. His interpreter said Carlos gets paid $10 a month back in Cuba, so that was equivalent to eight years' income."

New image: The young and hip have turned to cigars

This tale sounds like something from the 1980s – proof that the pre-election boomlet is gathering steam.

To the equally trendy Kings Head theatre pub in Islington, north London, for Midland Bank's pre-Christmas press party.

Mark Searles, head of marketing at Midland, decided to hire five comedians from the Comedy Players to provide *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*-type entertainment.

Mr Searles got more than he bargained for, however, when Steven Frost (the large, balding comedian from the Carling Black Label adverts) was chosen to play him on stage. Mr Frost's task was "to invent a brand new financial product". He eventually hit on a bank account based on the pound coins you insert in supermarket trolleys to release them. "We'll pay you 10 per cent interest when you return the trolley," declared Mr Frost, aka Mr Searles. The Midland man took this merciless ragging in good spirit. Remember, when Midland introduces its revolutionary Supermarket Trolley Account, you read it here first.

An anonymous employee from **Birmingham Midshires Building Society**, which is proud of its mutuality, has phoned me to say the society's mission statement has just been changed – with sinister implications.

"The statement used to say our aim was to be the number one building society by 2001. The new statement says that we will be the one to beat on business performance by 2001. Nothing about building society. So are we going to convert to a PLC? After all, we've already got a banking licence through our Western Trust subsidiary."

Obviously Birmingham Midshires's staff need reassuring. Dangerous things, mission statements.

NatWest Group has appointed **Achi Racov** to the role of chief information technology officer, and according to the former IT consultant, it's not a moment too soon. While Mr Racov has sorted the computer systems at Ulster Bank, Coutts South Africa and NatWest UK, his new role gives him a unique headache.

Two big problems face IT people at the moment. The first is programming computers to handle the year 2000, since computers operate on the last two digits and may throw a wobbly if presented with "00". Second, the same systems have to be rejigged to deal with EMU.

As for 2000, Mr Racov says: "We started very early on that one. As for EMU, its rules have not yet been clarified by the authorities. It would be very dangerous, however, if EMU and 2000 happened at the same time."

Since the first wave of EMU is scheduled for 1999, and schedules tend to slip, it sounds like Mr Racov and his 5,000-strong army of IT techies at NatWest will have their work cut out.

Speaking of EMU, Salomon Brothers in London has landed a very big fish to help in its preparations.

Dr Gunther Thumann, who was a senior economist for the investment bank in Frankfurt two years ago before he joined the German Ministry of Economics, is coming to London to head up its EMU research project.

The doctor was one of Germany's representatives on the European Monetary Committee. At least someone knows what it's all about.

John Willcock

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Hazlewood Foods (I)	386.5m (391.8m)	11.4m (16.1m)	3.09p (5.12p)	2.4p (2.4p)
Kenwood Appliances (I)	97.6m (87.3m)	3.29m (7.4m)	4.5p (11.3p)	3.25p (3.25p)
Marston Thompson (I)	91.38m (85.19m)	14.69m (13.94m)	13.17p (11.19p)	2.7p (2.5p)
Morrison Construction (I)	123.1m (98.3m)	4.77m (3.18m)	4.69p (4.26p)	1.64p
Prospect Industries (F)	88.73m (81.61m)	-1.49m (-21.3m)	-0.50p (-7.24p)	nil
Racal Electronics (I)	602m (503.9m)	21.2m (30.1m)	4.76p (7.09p)	2.1p (2.1p)
Siebe (I)	1.47bn (1.2bn)	190.4m (144.2m)	24p (19.2p)	4.9p (4.44p)
Wessex Water (I)	128.9m (120.3m)	75.5m (68.4m)	22.1p (20.1p)	5.7p (5p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (N) - Nine months

Warne destroys West Indies

Cricket

TONY COZIER

reports from Sydney

Australia 331 & 312-4 dec

West Indies 304 & 215

Australia win by 124 runs

For an hour and 35 minutes yesterday morning a little left-handed batsman with an exquisite sense of timing and his elegant partner responded to an early crisis with the flair that has earned West Indian cricket its elevated status in these parts.

But on either side of a thrilling partnership of 117 between Shivnarine Chanderpaul, the left-hander playing the role Brian Lara might have done, and Carl Hooper that briefly, if unrealistically, sparked the hope of an unlikely victory in the second Test there were collapses that were also typically West Indian.

Three wickets fell for two runs in the first 20 minutes, including Lara's, and, after Shane Warne produced one of his magic deliveries two balls before lunch to dismiss Chanderpaul for 71, the last seven West Indies wickets tumbled for 63 and Australia were home 20 minutes before tea.

They have been more disciplined, considerably sharper in the field and palpably more confident than the West Indies and their margin of victory, 124 runs, was far wider than it appeared. It was just one run less than that of the first Test in Brisbane a week earlier and, as then, followed a second innings declaration by Australia's daring captain, Mark Taylor.

It was the first time the West Indies had been beaten in two successive Tests since 1976, also in Australia, and represented a shift in the psychological balance between the teams. The aura of invincibility, first breached with Australia's 2-1 triumph in the Caribbean in 1995, has been completely shattered.

"Prior to 1995 they always felt we were going to crack at some stage, but I think that vibe has probably gone," Taylor said afterwards. "We know that if we play well and put them under pressure, we can make them crack." Taylor had brashly challenged the West Indies to total 340 to win and level the series. When he got rid of the overnight openers, Sherwin Campbell and Robert Samuels, and Lara feathered an attempted hook off the fast bowler Glenn McGrath, so low to the wicketkeeper Ian Healy that the standing umpire David Shepherd needed confirmation that it was clean from his square leg colleague, Daryl Hair, Australia were already counting their chickens.

Chanderpaul and Hooper made them quickly reassess the situation. Chanderpaul's counter-attack was uncharacteristic as he tends to be more an accumulator than an aggressor. Let off on a return chance by McGrath when six he proceeded to pepper the boundaries with strokes in every direction. Warne was especially singled out for attention and Taylor was forced to withdraw him after nine overs cost 52.

When he returned, Chanderpaul took two more of his 10 boundaries from full tosses but, two balls before the first interval, could do nothing to keep a fizzing leg-break that spun back a yard and bowled him off his pad. His 71 required only 68 balls. "That ball was the turning point in the day's play," Taylor said. "Chanderpaul played brilliantly, but you've got to back your bowlers and a bloke like Shane Warne can always bowl the sort of ball that turns a game."

Once play resumed there was nothing to stop Australia's advance. Hooper, breezing along in Chanderpaul's slipstream before the interval, was becalmed to the extent that he could only add 10 in an hour before Michael Bevan, Warne's left-arm equivalent, deceived him with a bouncing googly that Taylor caught at the second attempt after flicking it up with deft footwork. The lower order had no answer to the baffling spin of Warne and Bevan and the Australians were celebrating well before the tea break.

Fifth day; Australia won toss

AUSTRALIA – First Innings 331 (G S Blewett 69; C A Walsh 5-98).

WEST INDIES – First Innings 304 (S L Campbell 77; G D McGrath 4-82).

AUSTRALIA – Second Innings 312 for 4 dec (M T G Elliott 78 ret hurt).

WEST INDIES – Second Innings

(Overnight: 27 for 0)

S L Campbell lbw b McGrath	15
R G Samuels b Warne	16
B C Lara c Healy b McGrath	1
C L Hooper c Taylor b Bevan	57
S Chanderpaul b Warne	71
J C Adams c Blewett b McGrath	5
†C O Browne not out	25
I R Bishop run out	0
C E L Ambrose b Bevan	0
K C G Benjamin c Taylor b Warne	4
*C A Walsh c McGrath b Warne	18
Extras (lb2 nb1)	3
Total (69.4 overs)	215

Fall: 1-33 2-33 3-35 4-152 5-157 6-176 7-176 8-176 9-183.

Bowling: McGrath 17-7-36-3; Waugh 4-0-15-0; Gillespie 7-2-27-0; Warne 27.4-6-95-4; Bevan 14-2-40-2.

Umpires: D Shepherd (Eng) and D Hair (Aus).

Sussex's Giddins defence

Alan Caffyn, the Sussex chairman, has defended the county's treatment of Ed Giddins, claiming the drug-taking incident was not the only reason behind the decision to sack him.

In a letter to members, Caffyn responded to criticism that Sussex did not provide help and rehabilitation for the fast bowler.

Sussex took the decision to sack Giddins two days after he was found guilty of taking cocaine and banned for 19 months by the Test and County Cricket Board, and Caffyn said: "There is no way that a bowler of Ed's ability would not have been re-engaged unless there was good reason. The drug incident was just one factor and not the sole reason. I am not, however, prepared to go into details.

"Had Ed asked for help it would have been readily forthcoming. However, he continues to insist that he has never taken drugs of any sort before or since this incident, and that it only happened on this occasion because his drink was spiked. By his own statement Ed has not got a problem and it is, therefore, not possible to provide any help."

England's John Crawley is run out by Grant Flower during yesterday's batting débâcle in the opening first-class tour match against Mashonaland in Harare yesterday Photograph: Chris Turvey/Empics

Frustrated England A go close

MYLES HODGSON

reports from Canberra

ACT 216 & 320

England A 408 & 123-5

Match drawn

England A produced another impressive performance in falling just one shot away from victory after a frustrating final day in their match with Australian Capital Territory yesterday.

The tourists, who faced a victory target of 129 in 15 overs, finished just six short, on 123 for 5, to be denied their sixth successive victory. Resuming on 140 for 4, Ian Garrity inspired a battling display from the ACT tailenders, batting for more than five hours for 90, which included just four boundaries, to defy the England attack for 76 overs until he was last out as the innings ended on 320.

It left England with a daunting run chase. Needing a six off the last ball, Lancashire's wicketkeeper Warren Hegg swung and missed to halt the tourists' victory march across Australia.

Garrity was given support from Darryle Macdonald (28) and David Thornton (23) before the England captain, Adam Hollioake, ended their second innings with two wickets in as many balls to finish with 4 for 27.

Hollioake then opened England's reply with Mark Butcher but fell fourth ball to a brilliant catch from Bruce Hara at midwicket. Butcher hammered 23 off 21 deliveries and Owais Shah hit 29 off 22 deliveries before Michael Vaughan teamed up with Hegg to add 39 in three overs and take England to the brink of victory.

Final day of four; ACT won toss

ACT – First Innings 216 (P J Solway 59; P M Such 5-29).

ENGLAND A – First Innings 408 (A McGrath 108, G Chapple 59 no, C White 53; B J Smith 5-91).

ACT – Second Innings

(Overnight: 140 for 4)

I A Garrity c Harris b Hollioake	90
D J McDonald c Giles b Such	28
†M B Robinson b Giles	11
H O'Meagher c Hegg b Chapple	12
B J Smith b Harris	6
D J Thornton lbw b Hollioake	23
E A Mackenzie not out	0
Extras (b4, lb11, nb4)	19
Total (127.1 overs)	320

Fall: 1-108, 2-111, 3-138, 4-140, 5-187, 6-209, 7-251, 8-270, 9-319.

Bowling: Chapple 16-2-47-1; Harris 16-2-48-1; Such 47-23-73-3; White 12-4-31-0; Giles 23-2-67-1; Hollioake 11.1-1-27-4; Vaughan 2-0-12-0.

ENGLAND A – Second Innings

M A Butcher run out	24
*A J Hollioake c Hara b Smith	8
C White c Hara b Smith	10
O A Shah lbw b Thornton	29
A McGrath run out	5
M P Vaughan not out	34
†W K Hegg not out	10
Extras (lb3)	3
Total (for 5, 15 overs)	123

Fall: 1-12, 2-28, 3-56, 4-65, 5-84.

Did Not Bat: A F Giles, G Chapple, A J Harris, P M Such.

Bowling: Thornton 8-0-62-1; Smith 7-0-58-2.

Umpires: B Thornton and J Hanniford.

St Helens arrange game at Anfield

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

St Helens will spread their gospel to the football end of Merseyside next season by playing a Super League match at Anfield. Last season's double winners will stage their home match against Castleford on 27 April at Liverpool's ground in an attempt to turn the city on to rugby league.

"We are a Merseyside club and we are coming to the capital of Merseyside hoping to convert people to rugby league for their summer break," said the Saints chief executive, David Howes. "We are sending out a message that we want to become a regional side. We see this becoming an annual event, although there is no hidden agenda of merger or ground-sharing."

Saints hope an attractive fixture on a weekend without Premiership football will pull in potential fans from Liverpool as well as their own average support of 10,000. It will be the first league game that Anfield has hosted, although there were more than 17,000 at the ground for the Charity Shield between Wigan and Widnes in 1989 and 20,000 attended the World Club Challenge between Wigan and Penrith two years later.

Saints' Great Britain full-back Steve Prescott, who played football there as a schoolboy before concentrating on his rugby career, predicted that he and his team-mates would thrive on the atmosphere at Anfield. "Most of the Saints players are Liverpool fans and I think everyone will enjoy playing here," he said.

Liverpool's chief executive, Peter Robinson, is also looking forward to the match. "We are delighted to have this close link with St Helens," he said. "They have shown themselves to be an extremely progressive club."

Saints welcomed their new signing from the Auckland Warriors, the prop forward Julian O'Neill, who was taken from Manchester airport to Anfield to take part in the launch.

INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

FANTASY FOOTBALL

LATEST RESULTS AND TOP 50 TEAMS

THE INDEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

PHILIPS

Let's make things better

Today we publish the latest results in our Independent Fantasy Football game, supported by *Philips Energy Saver Light Bulbs*.

The Team Market and Scores table published below, shows four scores. The Week 16 (Wk 16) column lists all points scored in matches played between Monday 25 November - Sunday 1 December inclusive. Column B lists all points scored before the transfer period. Column A lists all points scored after the transfer period. The Overall (Ov) column lists the total amount of points scored in all matches played from Saturday 17 August - Sunday 1 December.

Also published today is the Top 50 League table (see left). It lists the overall top scoring Independent Fantasy Football managers and their teams for matches played between Saturday 17 August - Sunday 24 November.

Results will be published every Wednesday in The Independent for all games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the following Sunday, in the Independent on Sunday. The overall Top 50 League table will be printed every Wednesday and again on Sunday. Terms and conditions are as previously published and are available upon request.

SCORING SYSTEM

4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkeeper/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

PRIZES

The overall winner at the end of the season will be the entrant who has accrued more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. Win the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. The winner, plus companion, will see all the action of a quarter-final and a semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's World Cup qualifying games at Wembley.

MONTH 3 PRIZEWINNER

Congratulations to our third month's winner Paul Mothers, from Omagh, County Tyrone who has scored 130 points with his team Bedrock City. He has won a pair of tickets to see England v Italy on 12 February 1997. The third month's prize is for matches played between 28 October - 24 November.

TOP *Fifty* LEAGUE TABLE

CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 24 NOVEMBER

POS.	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mr John Cox	Southfill FC	[illegible]
2	Mr S A Scott	Foreign Backbone	441
3	Ms C M Down	The Deal's Reserves	434
3	Mr Andrew Burham	Wimbledon Stupid Heads	434
3	Paul Richardson	Cinchati Storm	434
6	David Robinson	Double D	433
7	Mr J. McCrossen	Wash Top Army	432
8	Ian Boyle	-	431
8	Adam Hogg	Blaggy Hogg	431
10	Mr David Ashton	TG Lodgers	429
10	Mr S King	Cruising Alexandra	429
10	Mr C Britton	Maple Mousse E	429
13	Mr P Srai	Dazza Boys	428
13	Mr D J Robinson	Tank for England	428
16	Mr S. Walls	The Untouchables	427
16	Mr M Dews	That's Handy Hardy	427
18	Mr J M Salt	Jotty City	426
20	Mr Chris Scott	Bruce Lee F.C.	425
20	Mr G Lake	Basket of Eggs	425
23	Husan Sakhry	I'm off to France United	424
23	Peter Frankental	Jose Marti	424
23	Mr R Northcroft	I Know Your Wife	424
26	Mr S Lawrence	Tessa's Little Marvels	423
26	Mr Steven Hart	Kees Cowboys	423
26	Keith Watson	Elementary Opportunities	423
26	Mr D. Edmondson	Edmo United	423
26	Steve Payne	Mondafield Tuesday	423
34	Jake Gibbons	Champagne Supernova	422
34	Mr Paul Glazzard	Chocolate Teapots	422
34	Scott Lyneff	Hoo Ha Serenaders	422
37	Mr Steve Payne	No Future in Europe	421
37	Mr M Crosland	Osney C. Lyons	421
37	Francis Hendson	Secondary Celtic	421
37	Andrew Boysek	Great Old Deed	421
42	Nick Knight	Knight's Nana Heads	420
45	Graham Mur	Clean Sheet FC	419
45	Andrew Clark	Clark United	419
45	Joe Cahill	The Fat Lady Sings	419
45	Paul Hooker	Nobbie's Boys	419
49	Mr P Srai	Dunkin is the Best	418
49	Steve Shipley	Set Against Intolerance	418
49	Mr R Jones	RJ Three	418
49	Mr S Seymour	Grave Interest	418
49	Mr S Wooley	Independent Boys	418
49	Barry Lee	Lee Manor	418
49	Simon Council	Top Boys	418

TEAM MARKET AND SCORES

B - Before transfer period

A - After transfer period

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 1 DECEMBER; WEEK 16 SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 25 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER

PHILIPS LIGHT BULBS

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS Wk16	B	A	Ov	VALUE (£m)
	GOALKEEPERS						
300	Seaman	ARS	0	38	1	39	5.9
303	Bosnich	AV	0	5	0	5	4.0
304	Flowers	BLA	2	19	3	22	5.2
305	Kharine	CHE	0	21	0	21	3.7
306	Hitchcock	CHE	0	12	0	12	1.5
307	Ogrizovic	COV	1	22	4	26	2.2
308	Filan	COV	0	5	0	5	1.5
309	Southall	EVE	1	25	4	29	3.0
330	Martyn	LEE	5	28	11	39	3.3
333	James	LIV	0	27	7	34	4.7
335	Poole	LEI	0	1	1	2	1.5
336	Hoult	DER	1	24	6	30	1.6
337	Schmeichel	MU	1	25	7	32	5.5
338	Walsh	MID	0	6	2	8	3.0
339	Srnicek	NEW	1	27	3	30	3.7
340	Hislop	NEW	0	1	0	1	3.7
343	Crossley	NOT	2	19	3	22	2.7
344	Wright	NOT	0	0	0	0	1.3
345	Beasant	SOT	1	16	1	17	1.8
346	Pressman	SW	5	24	11	35	2.7
347	Coton	SUN	0	26	0	26	1.8
348	Walker	TOT	0	36	6	42	3.4
349	Miklosko	WH	5	19	7	26	3.0
350	Sullivan	WIM	5	32	7	39	1.8
	DEFENDERS						
400	Dixon	ARS	4	46	4	50	3.1
403	Winterburn	ARS	1	48	3	51	3.1
404	Bould	ARS	1	36	2	38	3.0
405	Adams	ARS	-2	25	4	29	5.3
406	Keown	ARS	0	42	2	44	3.7
407	Staunton	AV	5	28	11	39	3.0
408	Southgate	AV	0	35	2	37	5.2
409	McGrath	DER	1	7	3	10	3.0
430	Ehiogu	AV	5	39	7	46	3.0
433	Wright	AV	4	36	6	42	3.4
434	Tiler	AV	0	19	1	20	1.2
435	Berg	BLA	2	17	3	20	3.4
436	Le Saux	BLA	5	5	5	10	4.0
437	Coleman	BLA	0	9	0	9	3.7
438	Hendry	BLA	2	17	2	19	4.4
439	Kenna	BLA	2	15	3	18	1.9
440	Duberry	CHE	1	6	3	9	3.0
443	Petrescu	CHE	1	26	7	33	3.0
444	Phelan	CHE	0	1	0	1	1.9
445	Leboeuf	CHE	0	41	1	42	4.4
446	Sinclair	CHE	1	0	1	1	2.2
447	Minto	CHE	1	17	3	20	1.3
448	Daish	COV	1	16	6	22	2.7
449	Shaw	COV	1	15	4	19	2.2
450	Burrows	COV	0	10	2	12	2.2
453	Stimac	DER	0	15	0	15	3.3
454	Powell (C)	DER	1	22	3	25	1.8
455	Wassall	DER	0	0	0	0	2.2
456	Short	EVE	1	33	2	35	3.0
457	Watson	EVE	1	10	5	15	2.7
458	Unsworth	EVE	1	30	9	39	3.0
459	Hottiger	EVE	0	1	0	1	2.2
460	Hinchcliffe	EVE	4	39	21	60	1.9
463	Jobson	LEE	0	20	0	20	2.7
464	Kelly	LEE	4	27	14	41	3.6
465	Wetherall	LEE	5	23	5	28	3.5
466	Dorigo	LEE	0	4	0	4	3.2
467	Pemberton	LEE	0	0	0	0	1.2
468	Walsh	LEI	0	22	6	28	2.2
469	Grayson	LEI	1	26	3	29	2.2
470	Whitlow	LEI	0	25	2	27	1.2
473	Watts	LEI	1	31	3	34	1.6
474	Babb	LIV	0	28	1	29	3.7
475	Jones (R)	LIV	0	0	0	0	2.7
476	Wright	LIV	0	22	6	28	2.8

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS Wk16	B	A	Ov	VALUE (£m)
477	Ruddock	LIV	0	2	11	13	3.0
478	Scales	LIV	0	6	0	6	4.4
479	Harkness	LIV	0	0	0	0	2.2
480	Neville (G)	MU	1	23	6	29	3.7
483	Neville (P)	MU	0	8	5	13	3.7
484	Irwin	MU	1	36	1	37	4.1
485	Pallister	MU	0	20	0	20	4.9
486	May	MU	1	31	11	42	3.0
487	Vickers	MID	0	18	2	20	2.2
488	Pearson	MID	0	5	0	5	2.2
489	Whyte	MID	1	14	3	17	2.2
490	Cox	MID	0	20	1	21	2.5
493	Albert	NEW	1	20	2	22	4.1
494	Howey	NEW	0	21	0	21	3.7
495	Peacock	NEW	0	25	2	27	3.0
496	Barton	NEW	0	6	0	6	3.3
497	Beresford	NEW	0	24	1	25	2.2
498	Cooper	NOT	6	17	7	24	3.0
499	Chettle	NOT	2	15	2	17	2.4
500	Jerkan	NOT	0	12	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
503	Lyttle	NOT	2	6	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
504	Pearce	NOT	5	20	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
505	Monkou	SOT	1	0	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
506	Dodd	SOT	1	20	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
507	Benali	SOT	0	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	2.2
508	Charlton	SOT	1	32	[illegible]	[illegible]	2.2
509	Nolan	SW	5	27	[illegible]	[illegible]	1.9
530	Atherton	SW	5	28	10	38	1.9
533	Walker	SW	5	19	11	30	2.5
534	Stefanovic	SW	0	21	5	26	1.6
535	Melville	SUN	1	31	7	38	2.2
536	Kubicki	SUN	1	23	3	26	1.2
537	Ball	SUN	0	34	2	36	2.2
538	Campbell	TOT	0	36	6	42	3.7
539	Calderwood	TOT	0	33	6	39	2.9
540	Austin	TOT	0	0	0	0	2.2
543	Edinburgh	TOT	0	32	0	32	1.6
544	Mabbutt	TOT	0	5	0	5	2.7
545	Dicks	WH	5	30	6	36	3.5
546	Bilic	WH	5	24	6	30	3.7
547	Rieper	WH	5	22	5	27	2.7
548	Hall	WH	0	0	0	0	2.7
549	Bowen	WH	0	25	0	25	2.2
550	Pearce	WIM	0	0	0	0	2.2
553	Reeves	[illegible]	0	0	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
554	Thorn	[illegible]	0	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
555	Thatcher	[illegible]	0	[illegible]	[illegible]	23	2.7
	MIDFIELDERS						
600	Merson	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
603	Platt	ARS	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
604	Parlour	ARS	[illegible]	[illegible]	2	[illegible]	2.4
605	Helder	ARS	0	2	0	2	3.7
606	Hillier	ARS	0	2	0	2	1.5
607	Taylor	AV	1	11	3	14	1.9
608	Townsend	AV	1	13	1	14	3.1
609	Draper	AV	1	12	2	14	4.1
630	Donis	BLA	4	15	4	19	3.0
633	Wilcox	BLA	5	10	6	16	3.7
634	Ripley	BLA	0	10	0	10	3.0
635	Sherwood	BLA	5	12	6	18	3.4
636	Flitcroft	BLA	2	7	3	10	3.0
637	Gullit	CHE	0	6	2	8	4.4
638	Di Matteo	CHE	1	26	3	29	4.4
639	Wise	CHE	1	14	3	17	3.3
640	Newton	CHE	1	2	1	3	2.4
643	Peacock	CHE	0	0	0	0	2.1
644	Salako	COV	4	15	7	22	2.4
645	Telfer	COV	0	7	2	9	1.8
646	Richardson	COV	0	7	1	8	2.4
647	McAllister	COV	1	14	11	25	3.0
648	Jess	COV	1	7	3	10	2.2

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS Wk16	B	A	Ov	VALUE (£m)
649	Simpson	DER	0	15	1	16	1.2
650	Asanovic	DER	5	19	9	28	2.2
653	Van Der Laan	DER	0	2	0	2	1.6
654	Ebbrell	EVE	0	4	0	4	1.9
655	Kanchelskis	EVE	1	17	15	32	6.7
656	Parkinson	EVE	1	9	5	14	1.8
657	Stuart	EVE	1	17	15	32	2.5
658	Grant	EVE	1	6	5	11	2.2
659	Bowyer	LEE	1	15	3	18	3.0
660	Wallace	LEE	0	16	1	17	1.5
663	Palmer	LEE	1	1	3	4	3.0
664	Barnes	LIV	0	22	3	25	3.0
665	Redknapp	LIV	0	5	6	11	5.2
666	McManaman	LIV	0	27	6	33	5.9
667	McAteer	LIV	0	15	3	18	3.7
668	Thomas	LIV	0	18	2	20	3.0
669	Giggs	MU	4	17	5	22	7.4
670	Beckham	MU	1	33	9	42	5.2
673	Keane	MU	4	2	9	11	6.5
674	Butt	[illegible]	[illegible]	17	11	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Sharpe	[illegible]	[illegible]	23	7	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	33	5	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	20	0	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0	7	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4	1	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Lee	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Batty	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Gillespie	NEW	1	13	3	16	3.0
685	Ginola	NEW	4	16	5	21	4.2
686	Clark	NEW	0	8	2	10	3.0
687	Woan	NOT	0	13	0	13	3.4
688	Bart-Williams	NOT	0	8	0	8	3.6
689	Stone	NOT	0	3	0	3	5.0
690	Gemmill	NOT	0	5	0	5	3.0
693	Parker	LEI	1	12	7	19	2.5
694	Taylor	LEI	0	13	1	14	1.6
695	Izzet	LEI	1	9	7	16	2.1
696	Waddle	SW	0	0	0	0	2.7
697	Blinker	SW	0	16	1	17	2.2
698	Jones	SW	0	0	0	0	2.0
699	Hyde	SW	1	10	3	13	1.8
700	Magilton	SOT	1	15	3	18	2.4
703	Venison	SOT	0	-1	0	-1	2.7
704	Heaney	SOT	0	10	1	11	2.2
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	15	[illegible]	[illegible]	3.0
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	8	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1	12	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0	6	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0	17	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0	15	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0	10	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
734	Williamson	WH	0	6	[illegible]	[illegible]	3.6
735	Dumitrescu	WH	0	6	0	6	3.7
736	Hughes	WH	1	26	2	28	2.7
737	Moncur	WH	1	11	2	13	2.7
738	Bishop	WH	1	5	7	12	3.0
739	Jones	WIM	0	17	2	19	2.8
740	Earle	WIM	6	35	12	47	3.1
743	Ardley	WIM	1	38	3	41	2.0
744	Fear	WIM	0	1	1	2	2.0
	STRIKERS						
800	Bergkamp	ARS	0	28	9	37	7.0
803	Wright	ARS	8	52	16	68	7.2
804	Hartson	ARS	1	21	2	23	3.7
806	Yorke	AV	6	37	11	48	6.7
807	Milosevic	AV	0	12	1	13	4.4
808	Johnson	AV	0	27	1	28	3.5
809	Joachim	AV	0	10	6	16	2.4
830	Shearer	NEW	5	52	9	61	11.1
834	Sutton	BLA	10	23	11	34	3.7
835	Vialli	CHE	1	41	6	47	8.1

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS Wk16	B	A	Ov	VALUE (£m)
836	Hughes	CHE	0	19	1	20	4.4
837	Spencer	CHE	0	6	0	6	2.5
838	Dublin	COV	4	18	15	33	4.7
839	Whelan	COV	1	14	6	20	3.2
840	Ndlovu	COV	0	3	3	6	4.5
843	Gabbiadini	DER	0	12	0	12	3.5
844	Ward	DER	6	13	11	24	2.5
845	Sturridge	DER	1	13	6	19	3.0
846	Ferguson	EVE	5	14	6	20	6.7
847	Amokachi	EVE	0	0	0	0	3.7
848	Rideout	EVE	0	3	0	3	3.0
849	Yeboah	LEE	0	0	0	0	5.9
850	Rush	LEE	5	14	6	20	5.2
853	Deane	LEE	4	7	9	16	3.0
854	Collymore	LIV	0	20	6	26	[illegible]
855	Fowler	LIV	0	28	5	33	8.5
856	Claridge	LEI	1	21	6	27	[illegible]
857	Heskey	LEI	0	31	3	34	[illegible]
858	Robins	LEI	0	1	0	1	2.0
[illegible]	[illegible]	MU	1	27	3	30	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	MU	0	10	1	11	3.0
863	[illegible]	MU	0	3	0	3	4.2
864	[illegible]	MID	0	0	0	0	3.1
[illegible]	[illegible]	MID	1	42	11	53	8.0
[illegible]	Barmby	[illegible]	1	17	21	38	6.7
867	[illegible]	NEW	0	21	6	27	4.4
868	[illegible]	NEW	1	7	3	10	7.4
869	Ferdinand	NEW	0	48	1	[illegible]	[illegible]
870	Saunders	NOT	2	26	3	[illegible]	[illegible]
873	Roy	NOT	1	6	1	[illegible]	[illegible]
874	Campbell	NOT	1	21	2	[illegible]	[illegible]
875	Booth	SW	1	37	3	40	4.4
876	Hirst	SW	0	10	0	10	5.5
877	Bright	SW	0	1	0	1	2.5
878	Le Tissier	SOT	0	40	2	42	7.0
879	Shipperley	SOT	0	20	0	20	3.7
880	Watson	SOT	0	16	1	17	2.2
883	Kelly	SUN	1	4	6	10	2.1
884	Stewart	SUN	0	13	-1	12	2.3
885	Sheringham	TOT	0	19	6	25	7.4
886	Armstrong	TOT	0	31	0	31	5.9
887	Rosenthal	TOT	0	8	1	9	2.1
888	Futre	WH	0	10	2	12	4.0
889	Raducioiu	WH	0	5	1	6	5.1
890	[illegible]	WH	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	WIM	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	WIM	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	WIM	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	MANAGERS						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Ferguson	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9.0
904	Evans	LIV	0	23	5	28	7.0
905	Rioch*	ARS	0	0	0	0	6.0
906	Royle	EVE	0	15	8	23	5.5
907	Harford*	BLA	0	4	0	4	5.5
908	Francis	TOT	0	17	3	20	5.0
909	Wilkinson*	LEE	0	7	0	7	3.5
930	Redknapp	WH	1	14	3	17	3.3
933	Gullit	CHE	0	22	2	24	4.5
934	Clark	NOT	1	8	1	9	3.3
935	Robson	MID	0	13	1	14	[illegible]
936	Reid	SUN	3	13	4	17	2.0
937	Souness	SOT	0	13	0	13	2.3
938	O'Neill	LEI	0	12	3	15	1.8
939	Smith	DER	3	14	7	21	2.0
940	Kinnear	WIM	3	23	5	28	2.2
943	Atkinson*	COV	0	8	1	9	4.0
944	Little	AV	3	18	6	24	5.0
945	Pleat	SW	1	16	5	21	3.5

* Currently out of management

Scores are subject to FA confirmation

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Chance hands Bridgwater a Rehearsal role

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

David Bridgwater has come in for the notable chance ride on Mr Mulligan in the Rehearsal Chase at Chepstow on Saturday, but coaxing the flamboyant jumper over the foxy Welsh fences may be the least of his problems.

The Rehearsal has established a notorious reputation in recent years, and even better horses than Mr Mulligan, the winner of five of his six races last season, have been dramatically humbled. Jodami in 1993 and Master Oats last year were both badly beaten when carrying the sash of reigning Gold Cup winners, and it remains the *contention of the former's trainer*, Peter Beaumont, that his horse was doped and that Master Oats showed such similarity in symptoms that he probably was too. The thorns in the fences will not be the only needles that Bridgwater and his weighing-room confederates may have to keep an eye out for at the weekend.

Bridgwater's call comes because Richard Johnson, Mr Mulligan's regular partner, is recuperating with a broken collarbone. Mick Fitzgerald and Norman Williamson were initially approached for the ride, but both are travelling instead to Sandown's Tingle Creek meeting. "The problem is there is only one good race at Chepstow and two or three at Sandown," Noel Chance, the chestnut's trainer, said. "But David is happy to ride him. He will come down on Thursday and get to know the horse.

"I suspect it will be a test with the rain falling in Wales, but I would rather soft ground for Mr Mulligan anyway. If he runs well then he will go for the King George."

Mark Dwyer has also ridden Mr Mulligan before but the Irishman is in no state to resume the partnership after breaking his arm at Kelso on Monday. Dwyer was recovering in hospital in Melrose yesterday following In Good Faith's fall in the novice hurdle, a collapse that drove his jockey into the turf like a tent peg.

Dwyer, who will remain in hospital for two days, endured four hours of surgery and then reported over the telephone to his wife, Jane, at their Malton home. The details listed here are not approppropriare for someone about to embark on an extravagant lunch.

"They have inserted a plate and wired the arm up," Mrs Dwyer said. "He was highly drugged up last night but he is a lot brighter today. I think he is pretty comfortable.

"They [the rider's medical team] are slightly concerned about infection setting in. Apparently the bone came through the skin and they had to remove part of Kelso racecourse from the wound. Because of that they were wary of operating and they are now giving him intravenous antibiotics."

If anything, the pain may have increased yesterday afternoon when Alabang, whose primary education has been in the hands of Dwyer, won a novice hurdle at Newcastle ridden by Peter Niven. "I feel sorry for Mark because he's done the schooling and everything on this horse," Maurice Camacho, the winning trainer, said.

Dwyer's fellow Irishman Tony McCoy will occupy the saddle of the William Hill Handicap Hurdle favourite Teinein at Sandown on Saturday. About 20 runners are expected to go to post, with as many as four of them coming from Ireland.

Britain wins Evry finale

The Peter Makin-trained Wilcuma, ridden by John Reid, took the main race on the last ever Evry card yesterday, ploughing through the mud to land the Listed Prix Edellic. Wilcuma, a 5-2 shot on the Pari-mutuel, scooted home by four lengths from Le Conquet.

Evry, which opened only in 1973 and has some of the best turf and most modern facilities of any French track, is to be closed because of an agreement between the French government and racing authorities in 1992. It was decided then that a major track had to close in return for government assistance to racing. Chantilly, Maisons-Laffitte and Deauville were all targeted but managed to survive.

All benefited from local support, something which Evry has lacked, plus the fact that they are important training centres.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Mill Thyme
(Catterick 1.20)
NB: Formal Invitation
(Southwell 1.30)

■ *The case for allowing diabetics, such as Jonothan Lower, to continue riding is to be discussed at a Jockey Club seminar about the illness today.*

■ Vindaloo, the winner of 11 starts on the Flat last year, is to embark on a hurdling career.

■ The Elite Racing Club is to sponsor the Triumph Hurdle.

Judges hear Flockton appeal

The Court of Appeal yesterday began its hearing of the Flockton Grey "ringer" case in which three men are challenging their 10 to two conviction by a York Crown Court jury in 1984 of conspiring to defraud bookmakers.

Keneth Richardson, 58, a businessman and gambler from Hutton, Humberside, and two associates, Colin Mathison and Peter Boddy, were convicted after the prosecution alleged that a three-year-old, Good Hand, was substituted for Flockton Grey when it romped home at 10-1 – all of 20 lengths ahead of the field in a two-year-old race at Leicester in 1982.

According to the Crown, the heavily backed Good Hand disappeared after the race and before a stewards' inquiry, leaving only a photograph as evidence.

The trial judge gave Richardson a nine-month suspended jail sentence and fined him £20,000. Later he was warned off all racecourses by the Jockey Club for 25 years. Mathison was fined £3,000 and Boddy conditionally discharged.

Those behind the betting coup stood to gain £36,000. Richardson, the former owner of both horses, claims the "ringer" was some other horse, unconnected with him.

His original appeal was turned down in 1986 and it was not until June last year that the Home Office agreed to refer the case back to the Court of Appeal.

Yesterday, Edmund Lawson QC, for the three men, told the court that the appeal was based on non-disclosure by the prosecution of potentially vital evidence, including photographs and witness statements, relating to the true identity of the winning horse.

Denis Bellamy, a zoologist called as a defence witness, told the appeal judges that he had compared three pictures of the winner with the photographs of Good Hand and concluded that "the horses are not the same". The hearing, was adjourned until today.

WILLIAM HILL HANDICAP HURDLE

Horse (Trainer & weight)	Coral	William Hill	Ladbrokes
Teinein (T Forster, 11st 8lb)	4-1	9-2	9-2
Potentate (M Pipe, 10 7)	8-1	7-1	9-1
Embellished (N Meade, Ir, 11 2)	10-1	8-1	7-1
Mister Morose (N Twiston-Davies, 11 7)	8-1	9-1	10-1
Silver Groom (R Akehurst, 11 6)	10-1	10-1	10-1
Hill Society (N Meade, Ir, 11 3)	doubtful	14-1	doubtful
Direct Route (J H Johnson, 11 2)	12-1	12-1	14-1
Chief's Song (S Dow, 11 7)	14-1	14-1	12-1
Eskimo Nel (J Spearing, 11 6)	12-1	14-1	12-1
Romancer (N Twiston-Davies, 11 6)	10-1	14-1	12-1
Charming Girl (O Sherwood, 10 12)	16-1	14-1	12-1
Flying Instructor (P Webber, 10 7)	16-1	14-1	12-1
Master Beveled (P D Evans, 11 1)	16-1	14-1	16-1
Make A Stand (M Pipe, 10 6)	14-1	16-1	20-1
[illegible] Boy (N Henderson, 11 2)	14-1	20-1	20-1
Chaparral (M Pipe, 10 4)	20-1	20-1	20-1
Dr Leunt (P Hobbs, 11 3)	20-1	20-1	20-1
Dreams End (P Bowen, 11 5)	16-1	20-1	14-1
Home Counties (D Moffatt, 11 12)	20-1	20-1	16-1
Mystical City (W Mullins, Ir, 11 8)	25-1	16-1	14-1
Mole Board (J Old, 12 0)	25-1	25-1	25-1
Tidjani (F Berry, Ir, 10 0)	33-1	33-1	33-1
Urban Dancing (B Ellison, 10 0)	33-1	33-1	20-1
Nashville Star (R Mathew, 10 0)	50-1	150-1	100-1

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3, 4 (Race run over 2m, Sandown, Saturday)

French players fêted on return

Tennis

The triumphant French Davis Cup team were fêted on their return to France as thousands of Parisians lined the Champs-Elysées yesterday.

The French President, Jacques Chirac, who hosted a reception for the players at the Elysée Palace, said of the quartet who beat Sweden 3-2 in a marathon final day in Malmö on Sunday: "They made us experience astonishing moments. We are infinitely proud of them."

Chirac congratulated the team, but he also praised television viewers who watched nearly 10 hours of the matches Sunday afternoon and evening, calling them "heroes of the little screen". Ratings showed that nearly 60 per cent of viewers tuned in to watch the last 15 minutes of the match, even though it was almost 11pm.

The players – Guy Forget, Arnaud Boetsch, Cedric Pioline and Guillaume Raoux – and the team captain, Yannick Noah, were driven down the Champs-Elysées in two open-top cars. They then drove to Roland Garros, home of the French Open, to place the Davis Cup at the foot of a statue of the late René Lacoste, who helped France win the trophy six successive times between 1927 and 1932. Lacoste died in October.

Rain stopped just in time for the parade and fans brought the players' cars to a standstill as they clamoured for autographs.

"It's incredible, when we were told we were going down the Champs-Elysées I didn't think there would be a crowd," said Boetsch, whose epic victory over Nicklas Kulti in the fifth match of the final in Malmö gave France the cup for the eighth time. It was the first time since the Davis Cup was created in 1900 that a final was decided in *the fifth set of the fifth match.*

It was only the third time in 20 years that a winning team has been feted on the Champs-Elysées; and the other two were both football teams. The honour was accorded to the 1976 European Cup finalists St *Etienne* and last season's European Cup-Winners' Cup champions, Paris St-Germain.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.30 unless stated

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS' LEAGUE

GROUP A
Auxerre v Rangers
Grasshopper Zurich v Ajax

GROUP B
Atletico Madrid v Widzew Lodz
B Dortmund v St Bucharest

GROUP C
Juventus v Fenerbahce
Rapid Vienna v Manchester Utd

GROUP D
Milan v Rosenborg Trondheim
IFK Gothenburg v Porto

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Arsenal v Southampton (7.45)
West Ham v Aston Villa (7.45)

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION
Stoke v Charlton (7.45)

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE
SECOND DIVISION
Hamilton v Brechin

FA UMBRO TROPHY Third qualifying round: Dartford v Dulwich Hamlet (7.45). **Third qualifying round replays:** Newport AFC v Cambridge City (7.45); Salisbury v Harrow Borough (7.45).

UNIBOND LEAGUE First Division: Farsley Celtic v Eastwood Town. **Challenge Cup third round:** Accrington Stanley v Flixton.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division: Backwell United v Westbury United; Brislington v Bristol Manor Farm.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Sheppey United v Faversham Town.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Hassocks v Saltdean United.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST League Premier Division: Sheffield v Ashfield United. First Division Cup Second round: Eccleshill Utd v Borrowash Vic.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Division: Clitheroe v Salford City; St Helens Town v Blackpool Rovers.

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE CUP Second round: Wisbech Town v Diss Town.

PONTINS LEAGUE Premier Division: Birmingham v Man Utd (7.15); Liverpool v Derby (7.0); Sheff Wed v Tranmere (7.0). **First Division:** Sheff Utd v Huddersfield (7.0). **Second Division:** Carlisle v Shrewsbury (7.0) Stockport v Man City (6.45) Barnsley v Bradford (7.0). **Third Division:** Wigan v Darlington (7.0). **Pontins League Cup Group Two:** Scarborough v York (7.0).

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION LEAGUE Cup: Bournemouth v Southampton ; Watford v QPR . **Postponed:** Ipswich v Luton.

FA YOUTH CUP Second round: Coventry v Aston Villa (7.0); Leeds v Crewe (7.0); Torquay v Swindon.

Rugby Union

(7.30 unless stated)

TOUR MATCHES: Combined Services v Argentina (at Rectory, Plymouth, 6.0); Leicester/Northampton v Western Samoa (at Leicester); Pontypridd v Queensland (7.0).

REPRESENTATIVE MATCH Ebbw Vale v Welsh Inv XV (7.0).

CLUB MATCHES: Bedford v RAF Plymouth v Bridgwater; Sale v Loughborough Students *(7.15); London Irish v Brunel University;* Nuneaton v Rugby.

HART GILMORE FOUR COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP: Gtr Birmingham v Derbyshire (Moseley).

ANGLO-WELSH CUP Pool 2B: Saracens v Treorchy.

Basketball

EUROPEAN CUP: London Towers v Podgorica (Yug) (8.0).

FONTWELL

HYPERION

12.40 Ben Bowden **1.10 Gemini Mist** **1.40 Dress Dance** **2.10 Lucky Eddie** **2.40 Cassio's Boy** **3.10 Keep It Zipped** **3.40 Province (nb)**

GOING: Good (Good to Soft in places).

■ Left-hand hurdle course; figure-of-eight chase course. Tight circuit, not suitable for long-striding horses.

■ Racecourse is south of village at junction of A29 and A27. Barnham railway station (Brighton - Portsmouth line) is 2 miles away. **ADMISSION:** Club £13; Junior Club (12 to 15-year-olds) £2, under 12s free; Tattersalls £9 (accompanied under-16s free); Silver Ring £5. **CAR PARK:** Picnic area £4 plus £4 for each occupant; remainder free.

SIS RACING CHANNEL

■ **LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS:** J Gifford – 24 winners from 120 runners gives a success ratio of 30.5% and a loss to a £1 level stake of £19.02; R Alner – 13 winners, 39 runners, 33.3%, +£2.47; R Curtis – 13 winners, 71 runners, 18.3%, -£39.33; R Rowe – 13 winners, 127 runners, 10.2%, -£17.09.

■ **LEADING JOCKEYS:** A Maguire – 23 wins, 128 rides, 18.0%, -£50.87; P Hide – 20 wins, 88 rides, 22.7%, +£23.60; J Osborne – 15 wins, 47 rides, 31.9%, +£10.33; A P McCoy – 15 wins, 77 rides, 19.5%, -£16.06.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Gold Lance (12.40), Flying Fiddler (2.40).

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Cassio's Boy (2.40) has been sent 161 miles by R Eckley from Lyonshall, Hereford & Worcs; Lucky Eddie (2.10) has been sent 143 miles by P Hobbs from Bilbrook, Somerset.

12.40 EARTHAM JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV I) £3,000 added 3YO 2m 2f 110yds Penalty Value £2,364

1 242223 BEN BOWDEN (17) (Mrs N F Maltby) S Woodman 11 5 .... J Osborne
2 ACADEMY HOUSE (A D Spence) R Akehurst 10 12 .... A P McCoy
3 0 GOLD LANCE (USA) (40) (Mrs Barbara Marchant) R O'Sullivan 10 12 .... D O'Sullivan B
4 6 HANBITOOH (USA) (25) (Fred Cotton) Mrs A Perrett 10 12 .... C Maude
5 *PRINCELY AFFAIR (Mrs Jasmine B Chesters) J M Bradley 10 12 .... T J Murphy*
6 PRIVATE PERCIVAL (Harlequin Racing) Jamie Poulton 10 12 .... A Dicken
7 5P QUIET MOMENTS (14) (The Furniture Shop) P Murphy 10 12 .... W Marston
8 35 SERENUS (USA) (25) (W V & Mrs E S Robins) N Henderson 10 12 .... J R Kavanagh
9 TATHMIN (Miss J M Bodycote) J Bosley 10 12 .... M Bosley
10 BOLD START LADY (Bold Start Lady Partnership) E Wheeler 10 7 .... M Griffiths (7)
11 0 ILLEGALLY YOURS (16) (Mrs J Murray) L Montague Hall 10 7 .... D Morris

– 11 declared –

BETTING: 11-10 Academy House, 3-1 Serenus, 9-2 Ben Bowden, 10-1 Princely Affair, 12-1 Hanbitooh, 14-1 Illegally Yours, 16-1 Gold Lance, 20-1 Tathmin, 25-1 others

1996: no corresponding meeting

FORM GUIDE

ACADEMY HOUSE, fourth in the Irish Cesarewitch when trained by Aidan O'Brien and a winner over two miles at the Curragh in August, looks a useful recruit to hurdling and can make a winning debut for Reg Akehurst. **Serenus**, a fair maiden on the Flat with Lord Huntingdon, finished a close third to Kerawi on his hurdling debut at Newbury, but that form has taken a few knocks and, last time, Nicky Henderson's colt could finish only fifth to Shooting Light at Sandown. His hurdling was not fluent that day, but he did finish a long way in front of the disappointing **Hanbitooh**, ex-Ed Dunlop and having his first run over timber then. **Ben Bowden** has finished out of the money just once from eight starts over hurdles, last time going down just over 16 lengths in third to Noble Lord at Cheltenham. He will do well to defy the penalty for his Newton Abbot win but certainly has place prospects again. **Princely Affair**, winner of a 10-furlong apprentices' handicap at Yarmouth in June when with Michael Bell, rates best of the others. **Selection:** ACADEMY HOUSE

1.10 SELSEY SELLING HURDLE (CLASS G) £2,450 added 2m 2f 110yds Penalty Value £2,010

1 P-23236 CREDIT CONTROLLER (16) (Roger J Spencer) J Ffitch-Heyes 7 10 12 .... J R Kavanagh B
2 005000/- FRUIT TOWN (683) (Mrs V Parry) P Butler 7 10 12 .... A P McCoy
3 P6 LANESRA BREEZE (7) (J J Wise) T J Naughton 4 10 12 .... C Maude
4 0/-0 LITTLE LUKE (17) (P Butler) P Butler 5 10 12 .... T J Murphy
5 5-4 MEMORY'S MUSIC (16) (W V Roker) M Madgwick 4 10 12 .... B Fenton
6 04-65F0 WATER HAZARD (17) (Nulli Secundus Racing Club) S Dow 4 10 12 .... A Dicken
7 ZESTI (Miss R J Bryant) T Clement 4 10 12 .... N Mann
8 PP CHURCHTOWN SPIRIT (16) (K Powell) T McGovern 5 10 7 .... G Crone
9 000P-P FLAMING ROSE (16) (Guy Luck) R Rowe 6 10 7 .... D O'Sullivan
10 0/300P- GEMINI MIST (258) (Mrs Nerys Dutfield) Mrs P Dutfield 5 10 7 .... P Holley
11 420 GRIFFIN'S GIRL (16) (Mrs B Sheils) P Mooney 4 10 7 .... S Ryan (5)
12 6322/P/- MINI FETE (FR) (733) (M Dinneen) K Burke 7 10 7 .... D Bridgwater

– 12 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Memory's Music, 4-1 Credit Controller, 5-1 Griffin's Girl, 6-1 Water Hazard, 10-1 Gemini Mist, Fruit Town, 12-1 Flaming Rose, 16-1 Mini Fete, 20-1 others

FORM GUIDE

MEMORY'S MUSIC, beaten seven and a half lengths in fourth to Ritto in a Plumpton novice *hurdle last month, will find this week seller much easier and should open his account.* That was only his second run over hurdles and his fifth of 13 to Court Nap at Windsor a year earlier reads well in the context of this race. **Griffin's Girl** was beaten 15 lengths by Severn Gale at Stratford in October and could manage only 10th of 21 to Peter Monamy at Leicester afterwards, but she has every chance in this company. So does **Water Hazard**, even though he has been disappointing on his last two starts, most recently when tailed off behind Sprintfayre over course and distance. Ex-Irish pointer **Fruit Town** had a warm-up run on the Flat at Ascot in October and is worth watching in the betting with Tony McCoy riding. **Credit Controller**, tailed off behind Whistling Buck at Plumpton last time, is re-equipped with the blinkers he wore when second to Omidjoy at the same course last season and has shown enough earlier this term to suggest he can figure. **Selection:** MEMORY'S MUSIC

1.40 NORFOLK CHALLENGE CUP NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,200 added 2m 2f Penalty Value £3,125

1 111633 WILLIE MAKEIT (22) (Old Berks Three) R Phillips 6 11 10 .... J Railton
2 4P00-54 DRESS DANCE (7) (Mrs J R Powell) N Mitchell 6 11 10 .... Sophie Mitchell (5)
3 6P25-65 BOLD ACRE (22) (Mrs Marion C Morgan) J M Bradley 6 11 9 .... T J Murphy
4 55/2/-54 DUKE OF APROLON (16) (The First Eleven Partnership) J Gifford 9 11 7 .... P Hide
5 PP/2P-P5 PINOCCHIO (16) (Bernard O'Brien) D O'Brien 9 11 5 .... D Walsh (3)
6 U/243/F- HIDDEN PLEASURE (985) (M J Deasley) T Jones 10 11 4 .... D Leahy
7 2U-03P0 FULL OF TRICKS (7) (Brian J White) J Bridger 8 10 8 .... D Morris
8 0/0/-06F JACKSONS BAY (9) (A J Martin) T Casey 9 10 2 .... D Bridgwater
9 U300/F- ALBURY GREY (1,363) (K Powell) T McGovern 9 10 0 .... G Crone
10 0/6P34-U KENTAVRUS WAY (36) (F L Hill) A Moore 5 10 0 .... B Powell

– 10 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Albury Grey 9st 13lb, Kentavrus Way 9st 10lb.

BETTING: 7-2 Duke Of Aprolon, 4-1 Dress Dance, Willie Makeit, 5-1 Bold Acre, 8-1 Pinocchio, 10-1 Jacksons Bay, 14-1 others

FORM GUIDE

DUKE OF APROLON, winner of a Sandown novice hurdle in 1992-93, has had his problems since and ran just once in 1994-95 (a close second to Falconbridge here) before missing all last season. Well beaten on his reappearance at Newton Abbot, he showed he retains plenty of ability at Plumpton last time when making much of the running to the third last and plugging on to be beaten just six lengths in fourth to Woodlands Boy. Josh Gifford's runner was *carrying 12lb more than his long-handicap weight then and, off a 5lb lower mark* today, can prove good enough for a belated second win. **Willie Makeit** ran up a hat-trick at Worcester (twice) and Southwell during the summer and goes off the same mark as when beating Seahawk Retriever two lengths for the last success, but he has been well beaten since, last time going down 13 lengths in third to Fichu at Ludlow. A bigger threat should be posed by **Dress Dance**, winner of a Taunton handicap hurdle off an official handicap rating of 93 last season. Fifth to Porphyrios at Worcester on his chasing debut and reappearance, he was far from disgraced when fourth to Or Royal at Chepstow last week. **Bold Acre** would be a good thing on the pick of his hurdling form but he has given little encouragement in two chases this season. **Selection:** DUKE OF APROLON

2.10 A & D LANDSCAPES HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £3,750 added 2m 2f 110yds Penalty Value £3,054

1 12115-5 TICKERTY'S GIFT (7) (K Higson) G L Moore 6 11 10 .... M Attwater (7)
2 231133- SUPREME LADY (235) (CD) (The Supreme Lady Partnership) Miss H Knight 5 11 8 .... J Osborne
3 P1632-4 SMUGGLER'S POINT (USA) (17) (Mrs V R Hoare) J Bridger 6 11 7 .... D Morris
4 100- LUCKY EDDIE (280) (I L Shaw) P Hobbs 5 11 3 .... C Maude
5 023-1 IRON N GOLD (46) (D C T Partnership) T Casey 4 10 9 .... *D Bridgwater*
6 1221-34 BON VOYAGE (USA) (38) (The Hon Mrs C Yeates) D Grissell 4 10 9 .... J R Kavanagh B
7 0/0142-5 MUHTASHIM (18) (Mrs Jenny Willment) J Ffitch-Heyes 6 10 1 .... B Fenton
8 F/604P5- RAAHIN (USA) (191) (CD) (Ron Atkins) S Woodman 11 10 0 .... M Richards

– 8 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Raahin 9st 2lb.

BETTING: 7-4 Supreme Lady, 4-1 Iron N Gold, 9-2 Lucky Eddie, 6-1 Smuggler's Point, 7-1 Tickerty's Gift, 8-1 Bon Voyage, 14-1 others

FORM GUIDE

LUCKY EDDIE won what looked a hot novice hurdle by Taunton's standards on his racecourse debut a year ago but he was well beaten in both subsequent runs. The form of that win did not work out as well as first seemed likely, but the fact remains that Lucky Eddie showed he goes well fresh and he is worth a chance on this handicap debut. **Supreme Lady** won at Leicester and over this course and distance last season but found Oatis Rose reversing earlier placings when they reopposed in the Hoechst Panacur Final at Newbury in March. Henrietta Knight's mare wound up with a third to Intermagic at Ascot off today's mark and may just have enough weight. **Tickerty's Gift**, successful four times at Lingfield last season (visored each time), prefers soft ground and gave only limited encouragement in fifth to Dontdressfordinner at Windsor last week. A line involving that winner gives **Muhtashim** the beating of Tickerty's Gift and John Ffitch-Heyes's gelding is on the same mark as when winning at Newton Abbot (from 7lb out of the handicap) back in May. **Iron N Gold** made a winning debut for Terry Casey at Stratford in October, beating Samba Sharply a neck, and is open to further improvement, but this first handicap represents a stiffer test. **Bon Voyage** is tried in blinkers following his Huntingdon flop last time and has dropped to a good mark. **Selection:** LUCKY EDDIE

2.40 SIDLESHAM HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added (FOR CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS) 2m 6f 110yds Penalty Value £2,280

1 044-324 FLYING FIDDLER (17) (Mike Roberts) M Roberts 5 11 10 .... P Henley B
2 3/00P12- MIRADOR (200) (Mrs J Whitehead, J McGiven & Two Kates) R Curtis 5 11 6 .... D Walsh
3 641P-4P DARING KING (7) (CD) (Cleeve Stables) M Bolton 6 11 6 .... L Aspell
4 10U4-12 CASSIO'S BOY (17) (Lyonshall Racing) R Eckley 5 11 4 .... D J Kavanagh
5 04200-0 PAVLOVA (60) (Mrs Margaret McGlone) R Rowe 6 11 0 .... A Garrity (5)
6 00P/66-6 SOMERSET DANCER (USA) (7) (Miss Julie Self) J Bridger 9 10 12 .... K Gaule
7 P-4U434 ROGER'S PAL (17) (A Moore) A Moore 9 10 9 .... M Batchelor (5)
8 04/-P0 PROFESSION (9) (Frederick Gray) F Gray 5 10 0 .... J K McCarthy (7) V

– 8 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Profession 8st 13lb.

BETTING: 7-4 Cassio's Boy, 5-2 Mirador, 9-2 Daring King, 6-1 Flying Fiddler, 8-1 Roger's Pal, 14-1 Pavlova, 16-1 others

FORM GUIDE

CASSIO'S BOY, successful at Chepstow and Hereford last season, made a winning return at Bangor, where he got up close home to beat Zingibar a head, the pair well clear. He failed by just a neck to match Moment Of Glory here last time, the pair again finishing a long way clear, and should be able to go one better today. **Mirador** failed by three-quarters of a length to beat Southern Power in the Ascot Stakes at the Royal meeting and followed up by winning a staying handicap at Chepstow. She wound up last jumps season in good form, winning at Ludlow and finishing second to Shers Delight at Fakenham and could pose a big threat if carrying over to hurdles some of the improvement she showed on the Flat. A good run from Iron N Gold in the preceding race would be a pointer to first-time-blinkered **Flying Fiddler's** chance, as he was a close third to that rival at Stratford in October. He went on to run Bayerd close at Plumpton but was well beaten behind Claireswan here last time. **Roger's Pal's** good runs from a long way out of the handicap here were followed by a poor effort last time and, even back at this trip, he cannot be relied upon. **Selection:** CASSIO'S BOY

3.10 MUNDHAM NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,200 added 3m 2f 110yds Penalty Value £3,080

1 1250-21 KEEP IT ZIPPED (35) (CD) (Mrs Luisa Stewart-Brown) O Sherwood 6 11 7 .... J Osborne
2 *FLAKED OATS (E B Swaffield) P Nicholls 7 10 10 .... A P McCoy*
3 2F GREY GORDEN (18) (T F Parrett) R Curtis 8 10 10 .... D Morris
4 LANGTON PARMILL (Miss J Hodgkinson) W Turner 11 10 10 .... N Willmington (7)
5 0P0/3- LITTLE ROWLEY (386) (J A Judd) Mrs L Richards 7 10 10 .... M Richards
6 PARAHANDY (Highflyers) G Balding 6 10 10 .... B Fenton
7 25/P- ROLLED GOLD (286) (David Jenks) Miss Venetia Williams 7 10 10 .... D Bridgwater
8 4- APATURA HATI (215) (Mrs R O Hutchings) R Alner 7 10 5 .... P Henley (3)

– 8 declared –

BETTING: 7-4 Keep It Zipped, 9-4 Flaked Oats, 7-2 Parahandy, 7-1 Grey Gorden, 14-1 Apatura Hati, 16-1 Rolled Gold, 20-1 *Little Rowley, 33-1 others*

FORM GUIDE

FLAKED OATS, winner of six of his 11 starts in point-to-points, can make a winning debut over fences. Paul Nicholls does well with his recruits from the pointing field and, while Flaked Oats does not look destined for the very top, he should be good enough today. **Keep It Zipped** did not look all that keen on his chasing debut at Newton Abbot when well beaten by Strong Tarquin. He did better here when beating **Grey Gorden** six lengths here afterwards but meets that rival 11lb worse. Grey Gorden fell four out when still in with every chance in Blasket Hero's Windsor race last time and has every chance to overturn placings with Keep It Zipped if he improves his jumping. **Apatura Hati** is another winning pointer but has achieved much less in that field than Flaked Oats. **Parahandy**, successful in Ireland, is another former pointer to watch out for, while **Rolled Gold** showed enough in a couple of bumpers the season before last to suggest he can get into the shake-up. **Selection:** FLAKED OATS

3.40 EARTHAM JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV II) £3,000 added to stakes 3YO 2m 2f 110yds Penalty Value £2,343

1 CLASSY CHIEF (Keith Sturgis) J White 10 12 .... T J Murphy
2 JELALI (The Fort Partnership) D Murray Smith 10 12 .... D Gallagher
3 PROVINCE (J E Brown) C Mann 10 12 .... J Railton
4 *RED RUSTY (USA) (Tony Walsh) P Hedger 10 12 .... M Richards*
5 SIBERIAN HENRY (C S Tateson) B Smart 10 12 .... C Llewellyn
6 EMBER (A P King) R Phillips 10 7 .... D Bridgwater
7 U0 EMBROIDERED (18) (James Evans) R Flower 10 7 .... J K McCarthy (7)
8 0 PETROS GEM (40) (Mrs R A Murrell) M Bolton 10 7 .... P Hide
9 REEM FEVER (Noel Cronin) D Arbuthnot 10 7 .... A P McCoy
10 VERONICA FRANCO (Gerry Boyer) B Pearce 10 7 .... K Gaule (5)

– 10 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Province, 5-1 Classy Chief, 6-1 Jelali, Reem Fever, 7-1 Red Rusty, 9-1 Veronica Franco, 10-1 Embroidered, 12-1 others

FORM GUIDE

PROVINCE stands out on what he achieved on the Flat, having won a mile maiden at Newmarket on a belated debut in August when trained by Geoff Lewis. He was out of his depth on his only subsequent start at Epsom but should be able to win races over hurdles. **Embroidered** and **Petros Gem**, the only two to have run over hurdles, have shown no promise. **Classy Chief** is the next highest rated on the Flat after Province. He managed a neck second to Castan in a mile handicap at Nottingham in October but was twice well beaten afterwards and is hardly consistent. **Jelali**, third behind Nuzu and Inchcailloch when tried over a staying trip at Bath in September, will have no difficulty getting the trip and looks the best alternative to Province. **Selection:** PROVINCE

CATTERICK

HYPERION

12.20 Tarry 12.50 Perpetual Light 1.20 Mill Thyme 1.50 Desert Brave 2.20 Aide Memoire 2.50 *Mullingar* 3.20 *FAITHFUL HAND (nap)*

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places).

■ Left-hand course, undulating and sharp. Run-in 240yds.

■ Course is NW of town on A6136. Darlington station 14m - buses to course. ADMISSION: Club £11; Tattersalls £7; Course £3.50 (under 16s free all enclosures). CAR PARK: Members £2, rest Free.

SIS RACING CHANNEL

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Just Rory (12.20).

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS:* Comedy Road *(2.50) has been sent 180 miles by R Lee from Byton, Shropshire.

12.20 ELLERTON NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV I) £3,000 added 3YO 2m

1 164 TARRY (26) (D) A Streeter 11 0 .... T Eley V
2 P JUST RORY (4) Miss Z Green 10 12 .... K Johnson B
3 NEEDLE MATCH J J O'Neill 10 12 .... R McGrath (5)
4 3 SWYNFORD SUPREME (18) J Bottomley 10 12 .... E Callaghan (3)
5 44 TOPAGLOW (17) P Dalton 10 12 .... N Williamson
6 P DUNTALKIN (90) J M Jefferson 10 7 .... M Newton (7)
7 FRO H Alexander 10 7 .... B Storey
8 GAURBY HENPECKED G M Moore 10 7 .... J Callaghan
9 3 LOMOND LASSIE (USA) (54) T Kersey 10 7 .... O Pears
10 FREDDY FAIR D Barker 10 7 .... Richard Guest
11 0 RADMORE BRANDY (26) G Richards 10 7 .... A Dobbin

– 11 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Tarry, 3-1 Swynford Supreme, 7-2 Topaglow, 7-1 Radmore Brandy, 8-1 Gaurby Henpecked, 12-1 Needle Match, 16-1 others.

12.50 ELLERTON NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV II) £3,000 added 3YO 2m

1 13 DOUBLE DASH (30) D Moffatt 11 5 .... D J Moffatt
2 2 CRABBIE'S PRIDE (27) M Meagher 10 12 .... A Dobbin
3 DIAMOND BEACH G M Moore 10 12 .... N Bentley
4 60 ERIC'S BETT (4) F Murphy 10 12 .... K Whelan
5 R NOIR ESPRIT (11) J Carr 10 12 .... F Leahy (3)
6 NORTHERN DIAMOND Miss M Rowland 10 12 .... Gary Lyons
7 30 ONYOURDOWN (4) J H Johnson 10 12 .... N Williamson
8 RECRUITMENT J Turner 10 12 .... T Reed
9 53 RUSSIAN RASCAL (11) T Easterby 10 12 .... R Garritty
10 02 ALWARQA (11) (BF) M Hammond 10 7 .... D Bentley
11 PERPETUAL LIGHT J Quinn 10 7 .... B Harding

– 11 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Crabbie's Pride, 9-2 Alwarqa, 5-1 Double Dash, Russian Rascal, 6-1 Diamond Beach, 12-1 Perpetual Light, 14-1 others

1.20 BROMPTON CONDITIONALS HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 3f

1 F-21121 SUPERTOP (12) L Lungo 8 12 0 .... I Jardine (5)
2 221P-44 RALITSA (4) M Hammond 4 11 10 .... R Burns (5)
3 1/22026- SUDDEN SPIN (280) (C) J Norton 6 11 6 .... S Grattan (3)
4 P0210-P MILL THYME (27) Mrs M Reveley 4 11 3 .... G Lee
5 04044P- DANBYS GORSE (200) J M Jefferson 4 10 11 .... E Callaghan
6 426-305 ANORAK (USA) (28) G M Moore 6 10 10 .... N Horrocks (7)
7 463/003- RED BEACON (189) J Goulding 9 10 8 .... I Supple
8 50/6012 TIP IT IN (7) (C) A Smith 7 10 7 .... *N Horrocks (5)*
9 6/014U6- FRIENDLY KNIGHT (217) J Haldane 6 10 5 .... F Leahy
10 53050/2 DOOLAR (USA) (25) P Dalton 9 10 3 .... M Newton (3)
11 050556- FRYUP SATELLITE (240) Mrs J Brown 5 10 2 .... G Cahill

– 11 declared –

BETTING: 11-4 Supertop, 9-2 Tip It In, 6-1 Ralitsa, Doolar, 10-1 Sudden Spin, Red Beacon, 12-1 others

1.50 BOBBY FAULKNER MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £4,000 added 2m

1 23-6241 FULL O'PRAISE (NZ) (22) (D) P Calver 9 12 0 .... T Reed
2 1534-51 UNCLE BERT (30) (D) Miss L V Russell 6 11 8 .... A Thornton
3 4025P-0 POSITIVE ACTION (181) (CD) M Barnes 10 10 13 .... S Taylor (5)
4 412334 REVE DE VALSE (USA) (38) R Johnson 9 10 8 .... K Johnson
5 313-223 THUNDERSTRUCK (22) (BF) J H Johnson 10 10 5 .... N Williamson
6 2605-03 DESERT BRAVE (26) Mrs S Smith 6 10 0 .... Richard Guest
7 0-3140S BOLANEY GIRL (7) F Murtagh 7 10 0 .... A Dobbin
8 550-P44 MASTER SALESMAN (22) (D) Mrs V Ward 13 10 0 .... Doubtful

– 8 declared –

Minimum: 10st. True weights: Bolaney Girl 9st 12lb, Master Salesman 9st 3lb.

BETTING: 5-2 Full O'Praise, 7-2 Uncle Bert, 4-1 Thunderstruck, 6-1 Reve De Valse, Desert Brave, 7-1 Bolaney Girl, 12-1 others

2.20 CALDERPRINT SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS G) £2,500 added 2m

1 F842 FLYAWAY BLUES (32) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 4 11 10 .... P Niven
2 5100-23 ELITE JUSTICE (116) (BF) S Gollings 4 11 9 .... A Dobbin B
3 R10/05-0 FAMILIAR ART (18) (CD) D Moffatt 5 11 6 .... D J Moffatt
4 6/121/ BATTUTA (1182) (D) Miss J Craze 7 11 3 .... N Williamson
5 P55856 AIDE MEMOIRE (18) R Johnson 7 11 1 .... K Johnson
6 P-05010 FLY TO THE END (USA) (7) (CD) J Quinn 6 11 1 .... B Harding
7 301-P50 CANDID LAD (84) F Storey 9 10 13 .... B Storey
8 033400- VINTAGE TAITTINGER (223) Miss L V Russell 4 10 8 .... R McGrath (5)
9 P5PP-48 CHUMMY'S SAGA (19) L Lungo 6 10 7 .... M Foster
10 50506-3 CHARLISTIONA (181) J Dodds 5 10 5 .... A Thornton
11 640354 LITTLE REDWING (32) M Hammond 4 10 4 .... R Garritty V
12 00500-3 OVER STATED (97) P Cheesbrough 6 10 3 .... R Supple
13 060600- MY HANDY MAN (309) D Barker 5 10 2 .... Richard Guest
14 /24P0P- RAGAZZO (198) J Wainwright 6 10 0 .... P Midgley (3)
15 3000-P HEAVENS ABOVE (50) F Murphy 4 10 0 .... K Whelan
16 06U0U-P ARTHUR BEE (22) B Bousfield 9 10 0 .... F Leahy (3)
17 0-0560P DARK MIDNIGHT (22) D Lamb 7 10 0 .... J Burke B
18 4PP-035 CATTON LADY (11) R Craggs 6 10 0 .... P McLoughlin
19 000-05 SECONDS AWAY (32) J Goldie 5 10 0 .... G Lee (3)
20 50/0P0-0 SHUT UP (34) Mrs E Moscrop 7 10 0 .... C McCormack (7)
21 0/FPRP- LADY KHADIJA (473) N Tinkler 10 10 0 .... E Husband (3)
22 P-6P HOMECREST (22) B Ellison 4 10 0 .... G Cahill (3) V
23 P/0F0-U0 PAINT YOUR WAGON (1) N Chamberlain 6 10 0 .... F Perratt

– 23 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Heavens Above 9st 13lb, Arthur Bee 9st 11lb, Dark Midnight 9st 10lb, Catton Lady, Seconds Away 9st 7lb, Shut Up 9st 5lb, Lady Khadija, Homecrest, Paint Your Wagon 9st 4lb.

BETTING: 4-1 Flyaway Blues, 6-1 Aide Memoire, 7-1 Elite Justice, 10-1 Familiar Art, 12-1 Over Stated, Charlistiona, Little Redwing, 14-1 others

2.50 CHARLES VICKERY MEMORIAL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,200 3m 1f 110yds

1 3122/1F- ISLAND CHIEF (373) (D) P Beaumont 7 12 0 .... R Supple
2 540/P0-6 MARCHWOOD (19) N Chamberlain 9 11 13 .... T Reed
3 131F44 COMEDY ROAD (25) (CD) R Lee 12 11 8 .... N Williamson
4 6U36PP- TWIN STATES (209) (CD) J Turner 7 11 6 .... A Thornton
5 41-03U0 GALE AHEAD (23) (D) G M Moore 6 11 5 .... N Bentley
6 U0F/032 KENMORE-SPEED (12) Mrs S Smith 9 11 3 .... Richard Guest
7 5/3FP40- MULLINGAR (233) J Charlton 7 11 1 .... A Dobbin
8 2144-63 PORT IN A STORM (11) M Hammond 7 10 10 .... Mr C Bonner (3)
9 3-P02U0 OFF THE BRU (25) (D) Mrs S Bradburne 11 10 9 .... Mr M Bradburne (7)
10 45-1530 FORWARD GLEN (7) P Cheesbrough 9 10 0 .... G Cahill (3) B
11 5P5545- SNOOK POINT (235) D Lamb 9 10 0 .... J Burke

– 11 declared –

Minimum: 10st. True weights: Forward Glen 9st 12lb, Snook Point 9st 11lb.

BETTING: 5-2 Kenmore-Speed, 6-1 Port In A Storm, Comedy Road, 7-1 Island Chief, 8-1 Off The Bru, Forward Glen, 10-1 Mullingar, 12-1 others

3.20 STREETLAM 'NATIONAL HUNT' NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 3f

1 1-P1 B THE ONE (25) J Quinn 5 11 3 .... R Garritty
2 442 FAITHFUL HAND (25) Mrs S Smith 6 10 10 .... Richard Guest
3 50 FOUR FROM HOME (12) J J O'Neill 4 10 10 .... R McGrath (5)
4 0- HADAWAY LAD (222) J H Johnson 4 10 10 .... N Williamson
5 30 HENPECKED (38) M Hammond 5 10 10 .... Mr C Bonner (3)
6 034-3 LAGEN BRIDGE (182) D Moffatt 7 10 10 .... D J Moffatt
7 00P- MAKE A BUCK (271) L Lungo 6 10 10 .... M Foster
8 230-46 PRIMITIVE HEART (25) J H Johnson 4 10 10 .... A Larnach
9 U60- ROBERT THE BRAVE (233) J M Jefferson 4 10 10 .... E Callaghan (3)
10 05-51 SILVER MINX (39) Mrs M Reveley 4 10 10 .... P Niven
11 P SMART IN SATIN (19) Miss L V Russell 6 10 10 .... A Thornton
12 006/ RASIN LUCK (11) R Craggs 6 10 5 .... B Storey

– 12 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 B The One, 3-1 Faithful Hand, 9-2 Silver Minx, 8-1 Henpecked, Primitive Heart, 10-1 Lagen Bridge, Four From Home, 14-1 others

SOUTHWELL

HYPERION

1.00 Lance Armstrong 1.30 Weeheby 2.00 Ath Cheannaithe 2.30 Lucky Dollar 3.00 Zambezi Spirit 3.30 First Crack

GOING: Good.

■ Left-hand sharp, oval course.

■ Course is 6m W of Newark. Rolleston Junction adjoins course. ADMISSION: Club £12; Tattersalls £6 (OAP members of course's Diamond Club £4, under-16s free). CAR PARK: Free.

SIS RACING CHANNEL

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None.

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: *None.*

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Red Tel (1.00) & Peter Monamy (2.00) sent 211 miles by M Pipe from Nicholashayne, Devon.

1.00 CHASING IN MIND 'NH' NOVICE HURDLE (QUAL.) (CLASS E) £3,000 2m 4f 110yds

1 0 AR AGHAIDH ABHAILE (25) Miss M Milligan 5 11 0 .... A S Smith
2 DRY HILL LAD J Norton 5 11 0 .... W Fry
3 0-4P FARMERS SUBSIDY (38) G M Moore 4 11 0 .... T Hogg (7)
4 0F116- LANCE ARMSTRONG (269) G McCourt 6 11 0 .... A Maguire
5 00-P NIGHT THYNE (43) M Roberts 4 11 0 .... G Hogan (3)
6 0000-4 OPTIMISTIC AFFAIR (22) A Streeter 5 11 0 .... A Larnach
7 21500 RED TEL (14) M Pipe 4 11 0 .... M A Fitzgerald
8 044650- CABLY-J (212) F Jackson 5 10 9 .... Mr N Kent
9 5004 HALAM BELL (20) W G M Turner 4 10 9 .... R Greene

– 9 declared –

BETTING: 7-4 Lance Armstrong, 11-4 Optimistic Affair, 4-1 Red Tel, 7-1 Cably-J, 10-1 Farmers Subsidy, 12-1 Dry Hill Lad, 16-1 others

1.30 WELLAND NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,200 added 2m

1 /PRU-F LOBSTER COTTAGE (22) (CD) K Bailey 8 11 5 .... C O'Dwyer
2 U2F0-15 SUBLIME FELLOW (33) (D) N Henderson 6 11 5 .... M A Fitzgerald
3 434P-3P CHEENA (28) C Smith 7 10 12 .... M Ranger
4 0P-66F ETHICAL NOTE (7) Mrs S Smith 5 10 12 .... R Wilkinson (7)
5 6/6/1-P2 FLAMING MIRACLE (26) G Barnett 6 10 12 .... R Farrant B
6 2114/ FORMAL INVITATION (1,346) D Nicholson 7 10 12 .... A Maguire
7 1P2602 SHALIK (40) J Jenkins 6 10 12 .... N T Egan (7)
8 08100-4 WEEHEBY (USA) (46) M Barraclough 7 10 12 .... S McNeill
9 360-041 MINSTER'S MADAM (30) J Neville 5 10 7 .... T Dascombe (3) V

– 9 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Sublime Fellow, 7-2 Formal Invitation, 9-2 Lobster Cottage, 6-1 Flaming Miracle, 8-1 Minster's Madam, Shalik, Weeheby, 16-1 others

2.00 SAIL INN HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £3,800 added 2m

1 313433/ ISAIAH (627) (CD) Mrs J Cecil 7 12 0 .... T Kent
2 135P0-2 KING ATHELSTAN (12) (D) B McMahon 8 11 9 .... Derek Byrne
3 120121 PETER MONAMY (16) (CD) M Pipe 4 11 4 .... M A Fitzgerald B
4 P61342 STAY WITH ME (5) (CD) C Egerton 6 10 9 .... Mr R Thornton (5)
5 0-314P6 ATH CHEANNAITHE (20) J Neville 4 10 2 .... A Maguire HB
6 500-0PP SHIFTING MOON (33) F Jordan 4 10 0 .... S Wynne B

– 6 declared –

BETTING: 7-4 King Athelstan, 11-4 Peter Monamy, 7-2 Stay With Me, 4-1 Isaiah, 12-1 Ath Cheannaithe, 25-1 Shifting Moon

2.30 G CHADWICK RETIREMENT NOVICE H'CAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,200 3m 110yds

1 123232 LUCKY DOLLAR (12) K Bailey 8 11 13 .... C O'Dwyer
2 1-35 MANOR MIEO (36) G Prodromou 10 11 4 .... Mr A Coe (7)
3 35/22P- OCEAN LEADER (278) Mrs D Haine 9 11 3 .... A Maguire
4 /3-41 GEMS LAD (26) Mrs S Smith 9 11 0 .... M A Fitzgerald
5 62/P00- RING CORBITTS (324) M Roberts 8 10 12 .... G Hogan (3)
6 5/2254P- DUNLIR (288) P Rodford 6 10 0 .... S Burrough
7 334246 RECORD LOVER (18) M Chapman 6 10 0 .... W Worthington
8 06000/P- TACTIX (387) Miss M Milligan 6 10 0 .... A S Smith
9 0/U55P-0 SWEET BUCK (13) R Pugh 7 10 0 .... M Sharratt

– 9 declared –

BETTING: 7-4 Lucky Dollar, 9-4 Gems Lad, 9-2 Ocean Leader, 7-1 Manor Mieo, 8-1 Ring Corbitts, 14-1 Dunlir, 16-1 Record Lover, 33-1 others

3.00 THAMES HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £6,000 added 2m 4f 110yds

1 04-2643 HOUGHTON (41) (D) W Jenks 10 11 10 .... Mr R Burton (7)
2 1P12-12 ZAMBEZI SPIRIT (30) (D BF) Mrs M Jones 7 11 8 .... Derek Byrne
3 /1441/0 CELTINO (39) (D) T Forster 8 11 7 .... S Wynne
4 1R/221- NETHERBY SAID (221) Miss M Milligan 6 11 1 .... A S Smith
5 PFF3-54 COPPER CABLE (20) C Smith 9 10 0 .... M Ranger

– 5 declared –

BETTING: 6-4 Zambezi Spirit, 5-2 Netherby Said, 4-1 Celtino, 9-2 Houghton, 14-1 Copper Cable

3.30 NENE CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 2m 4f 110yds

1 5555-12 DESERT FORCE (14) (C) A Streeter 7 11 10 .... G Hogan
2 43212P FIRST CRACK (33) (D) F Jordan 11 11 7 .... G Tormey
3 6F2112 FAWLEY FLYER (18) (D BF) W G M Turner 7 11 6 .... J Power (5)
4 0430P0- PRECIPICE RUN (198) (D) J Bakett 11 11 6 .... R Massey
5 021460- RAIN-N-SUN (203) (C) J L Harris 10 11 4 .... T Dascombe
6 33145-P SOLOMAN SPRINGS (40) (C) Mrs V Ward 6 10 12 .... D Fortt V
7 02/5440- TARGET LINE (328) (CD) Mrs S Smith 6 10 7 .... R Wilkinson (3)
8 0-82034 TASHREEF (28) J Balding 6 10 6 .... S Melrose (3) B
9 0503/5-0 WE'RE IN THE MONEY (16) Miss J Bower 12 10 0 .... Claudine Froggitt (7)

– 9 declared –

BETTING: 2-1 Desert Force, 5-2 Fawley Flyer, 5-1 First Crack, Tashreef, 8-1 Precipice Run, 12-1 Rain-N-Sun, 14-1 others

RACING RESULTS

NEWCASTLE

12.30: 1. KEMO SABO (D Parker) 7-2; 2. Auburn Boy 13-2; 3. Bairae Heights 4-1. 8 ran. 7-4 fav Miss Greenyards (6th). 8, 2. (C Parker, Lockerbie). Tote: £3.10; £1.10, £1.80, £4.10. Dual Forecast: £29.60. Computer Straight Forecast: £24.75. Tricast: £98.51.

1.00: 1. ALABANG (P Niven) 10-11 fav; 2. Pentland Squire 14-1; 3. Qattara 20-1. 16 ran. 6, 2. (M Camacho, Malton). Tote: £1.50; £1.60, £2.50, £7.00. Dual Forecast: £12.00. Computer Straight Forecast: £12.80. Trio: £43.00.

1.30: 1. POLITICAL TOWER (A Dobbin) 6-4 fav; 2. Timberlake 4-1; 3. Regal Romper 2-1. 5 ran. nk, 7. (R Nixon, Selkirk). Tote: £2.10; £1.10, £2.10. Dual Forecast: £2.90. CSF: £7.35.

2.00: 1. BEGGARS BANQUET (B Grattan) 9-2; 2. Isn At The Top 9-2; 3. Antarctic Wind 9-1. 18 ran. 7-2 fav Clavering (pulled up). ½, 26. (P Beaumont, Brandsby). Tote: £5.20; £2.10, £2.30, £3.30. Dual Forecast: £13.70. Computer Straight Forecast: £23.80. Tote Trio: £18.70. Non Runner: Leap In The Dark.

2.30: 1. SEDVICTA (G Cahill) 6-5 fav; 2. Leading Prospect 25-1; 3. At The Wag 10-3. 5 ran. 1½, 9. (M Reveley, Saltburn). Tote: £2.20; £1.50, £11.00. Dual Forecast: £15.30. CSF: £18.02.

3.00: 1. MAJORITY MAJOR (A S Smith) 14-1; 2. Shawwell 9-2; 3. Royal Surprise 14-1. 12 ran. [illegible] (P Cheesbrough, Bishop Auckland). Tote: £29.40; £2.90, £2.10, £3.80. Dual Forecast: £60.90. CSF: £73.74. Trio: £43.80.

3.30: 1. MR LURPAK (P Niven) 5-2 fav; 2. Cherry Dee 10-1; 3. Billy Buckskin 16-1. 8 ran. ¾, 8. (Mrs M Reveley, Saltburn). Tote: £4.30; £1.30, £3.00, £9.60. DF: £28.40. CSF: £34.48. Trio: £269.30.

Jackpot: £24,090.90 (part won, pool of £13,572.38 to Catterick today).

Placepot: £104.90. Quadpot: £27.00. Place 6: £98.71. Place 5: £45.38.

NEWTON ABBOT

12.50: 1. SHIFT AGAIN (Sophie Mitchell) 11-4; 2. Top Shoes 9-2; 3. Royal Standard 6-5 fav. 6 ran. 1½, 10. (O Sherwood, Upper Lambourn). Tote: £2.70; £2.50, £1.40. DF: £6.70. CSF: £10.70.

1.20: 1. POUCHER (S Wynne) 7-2; 2. Well Timed 9-2; 3. Colette's Choice 25-1. 7 ran. 11-8 fav Amber Spark (6th). 13, 14. (Capt T Forster, Downton). Tote: £4.60; £2.20, £2.70. DF: £7.20. CSF: £18.80.

1.50: 1. STORMY PASSAGE (A Maguire) 11-10 fav; 2. Hello Me Man 4-1; 3. Dr [illegible] 33-1. 9 ran. 17, 5. (P Hobbs, Minehead). Tote: £1.70; £1.10, £1.90, £7.70. DF: £4.70. CSF: £5.03. Trio: £23.80.

2.20: 1. THE LANCER (R Ford?) [illegible]

2.50: 1. BRAMBLEHILL BUCK [illegible]

3.20: 1. SAIL BY THE STARS (D Gallagher) [illegible]

Placepot: £25.40. Quadpot: £4.50. Place 6: £26.33. Place 5: £8.43.

SOUTHWELL

12.40: 1. MR FROSTY (S Sanders) 14-1; [illegible]

1.10: 1. THREE WEEKS (Dane O'Neill) [illegible]

1.40: 1. DOMINANT AIR (G Duffield) [illegible]

2.10: 1. RUNNING GREEN (Darren Moffatt) [illegible]

2.40: 1. HEAD GIRL (Dean McKeown) [illegible]

3.10: 1. MANFUL (G Duffield) [illegible]

3.40: 1. JIBEREEN (D Holland) [illegible]

Placepot: £286.40. Quadpot: £45.30. Place 6: £294.20. Place 5: £71.75.

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sport

Pienaar signed up by ambitious Saracens

Rugby Union
CHRIS HEWETT

Nelson Mandela has given his blessing and all is right with the world in north London. François Pienaar, the former Springbok captain and one of the few men on earth who can genuinely claim to have united South Africa behind a common cause, has swapped Johannesburg for Enfield and signed a two-year contract with Saracens.

As recently as six months ago, the entire Sarries squad could have picked a route through a crowded shopping centre without being accosted by a single autograph hunter. Now, thanks to the millions of their proprietor, Nigel Wray, they have three of world rugby's legends on their books. Pienaar, who led South Africa to the 1995 World Cup, joins Michael Lynagh, the greatest point-scorer in the game, and Philippe Sella, its most-capped player, in a side as long on know-how as it is in the tooth.

The new signing, a massive coup for the ambitious Londoners, was unveiled yesterday at a virtual reality computerdome in Leicester Square – no one could describe Wray, who owns the venue, as one of life's Luddites, either in business or in rugby. The reality for Saracens' First Division opponents is that one of the most committed and resourceful forwards of them all is now on their case.

"I phoned President Mandela, because I wanted him to know the situation," said Pienaar, who lost his place in the Springboks side through injury during last summer's titanic series with New Zealand and then found himself out in the cold when the national coach, Andre Markgraaf, invested in a more youthful squad for the current tour of Argentina, France and Wales. "He said he was sorry to hear that I was going, but gave me his support. I was grateful for that."

Pienaar, now 29, also contacted Louis Luyt, the autocratic president of the South African Rugby Football Union, to inform him of his decision. Given that Pienaar's relationship with the big cheese of Ellis Park has been strained to breaking point over the past year or so, it is safe to assume that one presidential conversation was considerably warmer than the other.

His first game for Saracens will be against Orrell on 28 December. You can only pity the Lancashire side, who have enough problems to confront without locking horns with Pienaar. "It wasn't an easy decision, but the challenge is new and very exciting," he said. "I hope this won't be seen as high treason back in South Africa; I feel I will be representing my country during my stay here and, anyway, I would love to play for the Springboks again."

That appears unlikely at this stage. The 18 months left on Pienaar's Sarfu contract are now void; the current Boks are beginning to find their feet again after the trauma of their defeat by the All Blacks and even though Wray said he would consider releasing his latest capture should the South Africans require him at some point during the English season, he did not exactly look overjoyed at the prospect. "We want every Saracen to play international rugby but if the situation arises for François next autumn, we will have to see," he said.

Certainly, Pienaar has no immediate intention of renewing links with the Transvaal provincial side he has led with such distinction in recent seasons – "Saracens are my club now", he insisted – and with his new package worth at least £200,000, he has no need to chase the big bucks south of the Equator. "I'm over the hurt of losing my Test place and while I've given my life to South African rugby and would do so again if asked. No player is bigger than the game," he said. "I need rugby and my rugby now is here in London."

Pienaar: Two-year deal

Aiming for the future: Reminders of a noble past flank Robert Taylor as he goes about his work in Fulton's gun shop, Bisley Photograph: Peter Jay

Shooting pains of change

KEITH ELLIOTT
at large

The site is a property developer's dream. Imagine 2,000 acres of undeveloped land – no hidden nuclear waste nor lurking radon – in a prime part of commuter-belt Surrey. Access is superb, with the M3 five minutes away, and towns like Guildford, Bracknell and Windsor are nearby. Yet it is rural enough, at least before those 10,000-plus homes go up, to be sold as "countryside" without fear of offending those schoolmarms at the Advertising Standards Authority.

I suspect the National Rifle Association, in its battle to oppose tighter gun controls, has found scant support arriving for those who make their living from turning fields into freeholds. You can imagine their lecherous eyes gazing at Bisley like stag partygoers watching a table dancer.

The logic is obvious. It is but a hop, skip and jump from stopping pistol-shooting to banning rifles and finally shotguns. With no shooting, what would be the use of preserving rifle ranges, however historic? Rather than leave that wonderful land fallow, why not do something useful with it like, er, build houses?

Loyalists say such a scenario is inconceivable, but an icy wind is already whistling through this strange outpost of Victorian England, where people still stop what they are doing when the national anthem plays. The demise of pistol-shooting will not, on its own, bring the gloriously faded clubhouses, so reminiscent of days of the Raj, tumbling down. But the NRA's income will slump, the place will look even more desolate in winter, and the quaint old gunsmiths at the heart of Bisley will suffer serious injury.

For many, Bisley without G E Fulton and Son would be like Christmas without Santa, London without Nelson's Column, England without the Queen. Its single-storey, timber-framed building was once the NRA offices. When the business moved from Wimbledon Common to Bisley in 1890, it took its verandahed colonial bungalow too. Soon afterwards, a young armoury sergeant called George Fulton took over the portion used as a workshop for £15 a year in rent.

George was almost a rich man thanks to his shooting skills. In 1888 he had won the Queen's Prize, the highest honour in target shooting. It brought him not just glory but a £250 prize, quite a sum in those days, which he used to start the shop. His son Arthur won the same trophy in 1914, 1926 and 1931, while Arthur's son, Robin, made it three generations by winning the Queen's Prize in 1958.

The shop has changed little, and it probably had the same smell of warm oil with a hint of gunpowder 100 years ago. The present partners, Roger Millard and Robert Taylor, have made a few gestures to the 20th century, such as selling night vision monoculars, but the old photographs, Arthur Fulton's medal case, a stuffed golden eagle, an antique safe and a pike's head remain.

Millard recalls: "We put in new lino about eight years ago and someone came in and said: 'I hope you're not changing the shop.' When we took up that old lino, there was a copy of *The Times* from 1888 underneath, with a headline about the 'Irish problem'."

In the surprisingly spacious area unseen by the public, there are ancient tools but little machinery. Most work is still done by hand. Hidden away, casually stacked, is a collection of antique arms, including a blunderbuss, a flintlock and an Arab matchlock with a crescent-shaped stock. It is like wandering around an Edwardian antique shop.

Millard joined Fulton's straight from the Army in 1969. Though he's now 65, he sees nothing odd about seven days a week opening or working 12 to 16 hours a day during the summer. "I can't retire. I still love driving through the gates here, into perfect peace. This is much more than a job, it is a service."

When Fulton-regulated rifles come up at auction, they always command a premium price. But Millard is not a rich man. "People come in, see the shop packed and think we must be making loads of money, but I always say: 'Listen to the till.' This is a meeting place, and you can't really charge for a job if you do it while a person waits."

It may seem Fulton's is stuck in a time warp, but Millard says things have changed. "It was much more relaxed in the early days, and not so competitive. We struggle to keep up with the demands of shooters now. Though the bull's-eye is smaller, they expect to hit it every time, and of course it is never the shooter who is at fault."

Though Millard knows as much about target rifles as anyone in the world, he has never held a firearms certificate and never shot on the ranges. "I don't have the time and it wouldn't be a good advert if I didn't shoot well." Most of the firm's work is overhauling target rifles, though they build about 50 a year.

A pistol ban will hit them very hard. "Our trade has become about 50 per cent pistols, with pistol ammunition about 90 per cent. I don't think a ban will affect us fatally but we shall have to tighten our belts more than one notch, I fear." Unconsciously, Millard glances towards the back of the shop, where two staff are working on guns.

Dunblane inevitably enters our conversation. "I closed the shop immediately on 13 March when I heard," he says. "I would not presume to argue with the parents or families of Dunblane, but it has become a political issue and we are caught in the middle.

"I'm determined that Fulton's will survive but I have to admit I am worried about the future. The end of shooting? It seems unthinkable, but it could happen." No wonder the property vultures are hovering.

Memory of Tucker inspires Oxford

It will be a very different Varsity Match next week, for the simple reason that tragedy changes everything, writes Chris Hewett. The annual Twickenham showpiece between Oxford and Cambridge will, as usual, feature 30 privileged high-achievers with their lives ahead of them, but their presence will be overshadowed by the memory of a colleague whose life was cut short playing the game he loved.

When Quentin de Bruyn, the Oxford captain, announced his side in the usual formal fashion yesterday, he made it abundantly clear that Ian Tucker's death from head injuries in a warm-up game against Saracens at the end of October would weigh on the thoughts of the Dark Blues far beyond the events of next Tuesday.

"We are always thinking about Ian, but we owe it to ourselves as rugby players to concentrate on every ruck and every tackle during the 80 minutes at Twickenham," said the Bloemfontein-born centre, who will win his second Blue next week. "In personal terms, we have used Ian's tragedy to forge our own links, although we hope we are good enough players not to have to depend wholly on emotion when we face Cambridge.

"The positive attitude shown by his family has inspired us to take ourselves back on to the pitch again. Some players felt that they could not face another rugby match, that they were not emotionally up to it. But I have spoken to Ian's family and friends and they have assured me that they are treating his death as a genuine accident that just happened to occur while he was playing his sport."

De Bruyn said that Oxford would not wear a No 12 shirt in memory of Tucker's death, not only next Tuesday but in all probability in future Varsity games as well. There will be a minute's silence at Twickenham, which is a 75,000 sell-out.

Oxford sprang one surprise in their team selection, preferring Nick Hockley to the Canadian international Karl Svoboda at hooker. Hockley, a member of Moseley, is now in his fourth year at the university and was last year's Greyhounds captain.

Cambridge, captained by Richard Bramley, also named their side yesterday. They include Matthew Singer, the former Neath and Saracens player, at centre following his appearance at full-back last year.

Oxford (v Cambridge, Varsity Match, Twickenham, 10 December): R Maher; C Smart, Q de Bruyn (capt), T Welsh, R Browne; J Avens, N Hogan; J Bothwell, N Hockley, D Penney, T Eisenhauer, K Spicer, M Orsler, J Kindon, C McCarthy.

Cambridge: P Sunderg; N Walne, M Singer, N Hill, R Phillips; R Ashforth, B Ryan, G Reynolds, T Murphy, N Holgate, R Bramley (capt), A Craig, M Hyde, R Earnshaw, J Griffiths.

■ Australia have made two changes for their final tour match against the Barbarians at Twickenham on Saturday. Sam Payne replaces George Gregan at scrum-half and the hooker Marco Caputo relegates Michael Foley to replacement duty.

AUSTRALIA (v Barbarians, Twickenham, Saturday): M Burke (New South Wales); J Roff (Australian Capital Territories), J Little (Queensland), T Horan (Queensland, capt), D Campese (NSW); P Howard (ACT), S Payne (NSW); D Crowley (Queensland), M Caputo (ACT), A Blades (NSW), D Giffin (ACT), T Gavin (NSW), D Manu (NSW) or G Finegan (ACT), M Brial (NSW), D Wilson (Queensland). Replacements: D Herbert (Queensland), R Tombs (NSW), S Larkham (ACT), B Robinson (ACT), A Heath (NSW), M Foley (Queensland).

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Keegan's Trent trip is stark lesson

Football

SIMON TURNBULL

Perhaps it is just as well that the most immediate challenge facing Kevin Keegan and his out-of-sorts Newcastle United team happens to be a fixture against Nottingham Forest at the City Ground on Monday night.

It is not merely that the Magpies have stooped so low, in terms of their recent form, that a trip to the Premiership's basement club promises to provide a much-needed pick-me-up. The visit will offer a reminder of the harsh realities of life in the latter stages of European competition.

Forest, it seems strange to recall, were Uefa Cup quarter-finalists last season. They overcame French opponents to reach the last eight, but after beating Lyon and then escaping from the lion's den of the Olympic Stadium with only a 2-1 defeat, Frank Clark's men were mauled 5-1 by Bayern Munich on the banks of the Trent.

Having been outclassed for 80 minutes on Tuesday night by a Metz team that rates as not even second division in the grand European scheme of things, a sobering measure of trepidation has entered Newcastle's thinking towards their Continental adventure. As Keegan put it: "You look at the teams left and you know if we play that badly again we'll go out. For long periods against Metz we were about as bad as we can be."

Keegan at least has three months in which to revitalise his uncharacteristically languid side before the first leg of the quarter-finals. In midfield in particular, the creative spark has gone missing since the scorching victories against Manchester United and Ferencvaros in October.

The draw in Geneva next Wednesday will, alongside Newcastle's, feature the names of Internazionale, Monaco, Brondby, Schalke 04, Valencia, Tenerife and Anderlecht.

Tenerife might suit Keegan. The Spaniards are coached by Jupp Heynckes, who could be excused for conceding defeat at the very sight of Newcastle's manager. He was in the Borussia Mönchengladbach teams beaten by Liverpool, and the inspirational Keegan, in the Uefa Cup final of 1973 and in the Champions' Cup final four years later.

Anderlecht, though, would hold the least fears for Newcastle. They beat the Belgians 2-1 in Brussels in August.

Whoever they face, Newcastle will have to play the first leg without the man who scored the goals against Metz, Faustino Asprilla having been yellow-carded after removing his shirt and hoisting it on a corner flag in celebration. The Colombian also pulled out of his country's World Cup qualifier in Venezuela next week after suffering a hamstring injury in Tuesday's match.

"Maybe sometimes we should give a yellow card to the ref," David Ginola said. "We have to live with celebration. That is life. Life is too miserable sometimes." It certainly has been on Tyneside of late.

Smith may lead British Whitbread challenge

Sailing

STUART ALEXANDER

A multi-million pound British-based challenge for next September's Whitbread round-the-world race is expected to be announced within the next few days.

The tobacco company, Gallaher, is thought to be planning a project, costing at least £5m, which could include the recruitment of the leading British skipper, Lawrie Smith. The boat would be called Silk Cut, which is one of the leading brands produced by Gallaher in the United Kingdom.

The deal would be an important boost to British sailing, which in recent years has struggled to find adequate financial support to fund entries in major international events such as the Whitbread and the America's Cup.

A major complication in the plan, however, is that Smith is already the skipper of an entry for next year's Whitbread. In June this year he signed a contract with EF, a Swedish company selling language and educational products around the world and which is investing £10m in a two-boat entry for the 1997-98 race.

Gallaher wants to recruit Smith because it sees him as the best skipper in Britain. Smith is highly resp ected by his competitors and turned around the Intrum Justitia challenge in the last Whitbread. The negotiations with EF are understood to have centred on Gallaher buying into the Swedes' design and technology programme. EF has been using two 1993 boats, Intrum Justitia and Galicia, to choose crew and test sails. Masts and keels are a separate programme.

EF is also building two new, Bruce Farr-designed boats in Sweden, one for an all-male crew at present skippered by Smith, the other for an all-woman crew. It is understood that the Silk Cut yacht, also designed by Bruce Farr, is being built in Australia.

While EF does not want to lose Smith, who skippered Rothmans in 1989-90 and another tobacco-sponsored yacht, Fortuna, in 1993-94 until it retired, the Swedes are likely to receive substantial compensation in return for releasing him from his contract.

If the deal goes ahead, Smith may bring some of EF's British crew with him. Only four weeks ago EF announced that four Britons, Gordon Maguire, Neal McDonald, Adrian Stead and Steve Hayles, had joined their team. Despite earlier claims that they had signed written contracts, it is now understood that they have only verbal agreements. Smith would almost certainly want to retain some of his core crew in the event of any move.

Signs that the rush is on to announce the Silk Cut entry in the race have been seen this week in Hamble. The 1993 Whitbread boat, Dolphin & Youth, which until recently had been the entry of the Sussex Challenge, is being painted there in Silk Cut colours. It is thought the yacht will be the centrepiece on the forecourt at Earls Court for the London Boat Show, which opens in four weeks' time.

Gallaher may even be preparing to announce plans to sponsor entries in the next two Whitbreads. As an existing sponsorship, this could circumvent any possible future legislation banning cigarette promotion.

EF, meanwhile, would have to move smartly to find a replacement for Smith. The Swedes spoke earlier this year to the 1993-94 race winner, the New Zealander Ross Field, about the possibility of his being skipper, but instead decided on the man who had been their No 1 choice throughout.

If Smith does leave, the favourite to replace him is the San Francisco-based America's Cup skipper, Paul Cayard. However, the Frenchman, Marc Pajot, could also figure, along with two or three others.

Rowell returns to Underwood

Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWETT

Tony Underwood had double cause for celebration yesterday. Not only did Jack Rowell, the England coach, recall the Newcastle wing to a 23-man squad for the international with Argentina on Saturday week, but he also waited until Jonah Lomu was well out of the way before doing so. Sighs of relief all round.

Underwood has not played Test rugby since conceding four tries to his New Zealand nemesis in Cape Town 18 months ago. It remains to be seen whether Rowell completes his rehabilitation by giving him a starting place – he will name his line-up on Monday – but the 27-year-old's pace would be of undeniable value to an England back division worryingly short of that all-important commodity.

If Rowell feels inclined to tinker with the side after last weekend's defeat at the hands of the New Zealand Barbarians – and he should more than tinker with the midfield – Jeremy Guscott remains the most likely addition, possibly at the expense of Will Carling. But Underwood is now in a prime position to challenge Adedayo Adebayo for the left-wing berth and it will be no surprise to see him back in the limelight in time for the start of the Five Nations.

Although Underwood has played most of his international rugby on the right wing, it would be savagely hard of Rowell to turn his back on Jon Sleightholme, who produced a class finish to score one of England's two tries against the New Zealanders. Besides, Sleightholme needs his Test place more than most because it is the only way he can get a game; his club selectors at Bath have again preferred Jason Robinson for this weekend's league match with Harlequins.

England also named three contrasting A teams for next week's hectic second-string schedule. Three games in four days against Argentina, the Junior Springboks and Queensland give the selectors ample opportunity to weigh up the available talent and the programme offers important opportunities to a handful of outstanding prospects.

Richard Hill, the Saracens' open-side flanker, faces both the Pumas and the Australians and two strong performances could persuade Rowell to juggle his senior back row, which lacks a natural breakaway element. The same is true at outside-half. Paul Grayson, last year's Test stand-off, gets a chance to impress along with Rob Liley of Leicester and, intriguingly, Mark Mapletoft of Gloucester.

Organisers of the Heineken European Cup have confirmed that Leicester's semi-final with holders Toulouse will take place at Welford Road on 4 January while Brive entertain Cardiff 24 hours later. If the final turns out to be an all-French affair, it will probably be held in Bordeaux on 25 January. Any other pairing will mean a final at the National Stadium in Cardiff on the same date.

ENGLAND SQUAD (v Argentina, Twickenham, 14 Dec): Backs: T Stimpson (Newcastle), J Sleightholme (Bath), W Carling (Harlequins), P de Glanville (Bath capt), A Adebayo (Bath), M Catt (Bath), A Gomarsall (Wasps), J Guscott (Bath), A King (Wasps), K Bracken (Saracens), T Underwood (Newcastle). Forwards: G Rowntree (Leicester), M Regan (Bristol), J Leonard (Harlequins), M Johnson (Leicester), S Shaw (Bristol), T Rodber (Northampton), L Dallaglio (Wasps), C Sheehy (Wasps), B Clarke (Richmond), E Hardwick (Coventry), P Greening (Gloucester), V Ubogu (Bath).

ENGLAND A (v Argentina, Northampton, 10 Dec): N Beal (Northampton); D Luger (Harlequins), A Blyth (Newcastle), W Greenwood (Leicester), I Hunter (Northampton); P Grayson (Northampton), M Dawson (Northampton); M Volland (Northampton), R Cockerill (Leicester), D Garforth (Leicester), G Archer (Newcastle), D Sims (Gloucester), M Corry (Bristol), A Diprose (Saracens, capt), R Hill (Saracens). Replacements: J Ewens (Bath), M Mapletoft (Gloucester), N Walshe (Harlequins), N Webber (Moseley), R Kelleher (London Irish), W Davidson (Harlequins). Travelling reserves: M Perry (Bath), C Murphy (West Hartlepool).

ENGLAND A (v South Africa A, Gloucester, 11 Dec): C Catling (Gloucester); B Johnson (Army and Newbury), J Bassendell (Sale), N Greenstock (Wasps), S Bromley (Harlequins); R Liley (Leicester), A Healey (Leicester); K Yates (Bath), S Mitchell (Wasps), J Mallett (Bath), D Grewcock (Coventry), R Fidler (Gloucester), G Allison (Harlequins), S Ojomoh (Bath, capt), R Jenkins (Harlequins). Replacements: J Alexander (Esher), J Harris (Coventry), S Benton (Gloucester), K Brooking (Exeter), W Green (Bath), P Anglesea (Orrell). Travelling reserves: P Vickery (Gloucester).

ENGLAND A (v Queensland, Gateshead, 13 DEC): J Mallinder (Sale); D Luger (Harlequins), W Greenwood (Leicester), A Blyth (Newcastle), J Fallon (Richmond); M Mapletoft (Gloucester), M Dawson (Northampton capt); M Volland (Northampton), R Cockerill (Leicester), N Webber (Moseley), C Murphy (West Hartlepool), D Sims (Gloucester), M Corry (Bristol), A Diprose (Saracens), R Hill (Saracens). Replacements: J Ewens (Bath), M Perry (Bath), N Walshe (Harlequins), R Kelleher (London Irish), W Green (Wasps), W Davidson (Harlequins).

French hopes lifted by return of Merle

France hope their powerful lock Olivier Merle, back in a revamped team for the second Test against the world champions, South Africa, in Paris on Saturday, will help them restore some pride.

"Olivier has always been a first-choice player this season and we missed him a lot last Saturday," said the French coach, Jean-Claude Skrela, referring to the first Test won 22-12 by the Springboks in Bordeaux.

Merle, fit again after a rib injury, is a tough customer in line-outs, scrums and mauls and is the sort of player France need to challenge the strong Springbok forwards.

Skrela, who has had to cope with a string of injuries, on Wednesday unveiled a team with six new names including the Bourgoin winger Laurent Leflamand, who will earn his first cap, and two changes of position.

The other players to come in are the winger David Venditti, outside-half Christophe Lamaison, the scrum-half Guy Accoceberry and the hooker Marc Dal Maso. Richard Dourthé switches from wing to centre while the captain Abdelatif Benazzi moves from flanker to No 8.

"The players must understand that if you want to run the ball, you have to fight to win it first," Skrela said. "We thought that was obvious at international level but it didn't look that way in the first Test."

For the first time in their history, the Springboks will play four successive Tests with the same team as their squad for Saturday's match is unchanged from the first Test and two previous Tests in Argentina.

The hooker James Dalton, who left the pitch in Bordeaux with a bruised shoulder, should be fit and so should Joubert despite a minor thigh injury.

FRANCE (v South Africa, Paris, Saturday): J-L Sadourny; L Leflamand, R Dourthé, S Glas, D Venditti; C Lamaison, G Accoceberry; C Califano, M Dal Maso, F Tournaire, O Merle, F Pelous, P Beneton, R Cassel, A Benazzi (capt).

SOUTH AFRICA: A Joubert; J Small, J Mulder, H Le Roux, J Olivier; H Honiball, J van der Westhuizen; D Theron, J Dalton, A Garvey, K Wiese, M Andrews, R Kruger, A Venter, G Teichmann (capt).

Goran Ivanisevic on his way to victory over Mikael Tillstrom in Munich yesterday Photograph: Vincent Kessler/Reuter

Jeers for Agassi's parting shot

Tennis

ADRIAN WARNER
reports from Munich

Andre Agassi headed for a six-week break from the game here yesterday with the boos and whistles of angry, disappointed fans ringing in his ears.

For the second time within a month, Agassi faced a cacophony of jeers and whistles from German fans after a 76-minute, 6-3, 6-4 defeat by the Australian doubles expert Mark Woodforde in the first round of the Compaq Grand Slam Cup.

The chorus of disapproval was not as loud it was in Hanover last month when Agassi put up a spineless display against the world No 1, Pete Sampras, in the ATP World Championship and promptly pulled out of the event, citing illness.

But Agassi admitted he had been suffering with motivation problems in the last few months and needed a break from the game, and has decided to miss next month's Australian Open.

"I certainly am taking the time off in the hope and desire and plan of getting strong, fit and getting my game back to where it can be," he said. "I seem to thrive in kind of digging myself in a bit of a hole and getting excited to come out of it again.

"None of it's worth it if you just keep running yourself into the ground, if you keep having to play events and keep chasing your tail."

The defending champion, Goran Ivanisevic, had no such problems. The Croat powered past Sweden's Mikael Tillstrom. Ivanisevic put on a fine display of aggressive serving to clinch a 6-4, 6-2 victory in just 55 minutes.

There were very few rallies on the fast surface as both players hammered in massive serves. Ivanisevic is capable of some subtle tennis, but he rarely needed any this time. The only drama came in the seventh game of the first set when Ivanisevic had a break point.

Tillstrom's volley at the net clearly landed out but was called in. Ivanisevic argued with the umpire after watching a replay on the television screen above the court.

The Croat eventually cooled down and went on to clinch the set after 31 minutes after the best rally of the match during which he hit a half-volley through his legs. A break early in the next further settled his nerves, and Ivanisevic moved on to the quarter-finals.

Tim Henman, the British No 1, faces a quarter-final contest with MaliVai Washington which could earn him a $425,000 (£257,000) if he beats the American today. Henman beat Germany's Michael Stich, the 1991 Wimbledon champion, 6-3, 6-3 in the first round on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old continues to insist that money is not the major incentive this week. "I know there is a lot of money at stake but I'm pleased with the way I've blocked it out of my mind. I'm happy to be playing in an event where there are huge amounts to be won but I'm focused on winning matches, not the money," he said.

■ Monica Seles was forced off court again by a nagging shoulder injury, retiring after losing the first set of her match against Slovakia's Karina Habsudova on her debut at the Komercni Banka Open in Brno, the Czech Republic, yesterday.

SPORTING DIGEST

Danilovic puts the Heat on NY Knicks

Basketball

Sasha Danilovic led the Miami Heat with seven out of seven from three-point range as Miami won their eighth successive game, a team record, routing the stumbling New York Knicks 99-75.

Dan Majerle added 22 points to Danilovic's 21 for the Heat, who increased their lead to three games over the Knicks in the Atlantic Division of the National Basketball Association in winning their seventh straight away game.

"We were humbled at home," said the Knicks coach, Jeff Van Gundy, whose team have won four and lost four at Madison Square Garden.

Danilovic, a 26-year-old Serbian in his second season with Miami, said: "I was just open tonight, they gave me the ball at the right time and I just made the shots. I am just playing the same game I always play."

It was first win at Madison Square Garden for the Heat coach, Pat Riley, since resigning as the Knicks coach in 1995. He was roundly booed, as he was last season when Miami lost twice in New York.

Allan Houston had 14 points and Larry Johnson and Patrick Ewing added 12 apiece for the Knicks, who never led. "Quite frankly, I just felt that tonight's game, we just didn't bring a competitive spirit," the Knicks forward Buck Williams said.

In Milwaukee, Michael Jordan scored 40 points and unheralded Jason Caffey inspired a pivotal fourth-quarter run with six points as the Chicago Bulls beat the Bucks 107-104. Jordan recorded his 148th career game of 40-plus points as the Bulls turned an 80-80 tie into a 14-point lead with four minutes to play.

In Los Angeles, Shaquille O'Neal scored 32 points, including four in the final 63 seconds, and had 14 rebounds to lead the Lakers to a 110-106 win over the Seattle SuperSonics in a meeting of the Pacific Division's top two teams.

Nick Van Exel scored 16 of his 18 points in the second half, Byron Scott added 16 and Eddie Jones had 15 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for Los Angeles who moved within one game of Seattle at the top.

Clubs are allowed an extra Australian

Rugby League

British clubs will be allowed six overseas players next season in order to mop up a surplus of Super League players in Australasia, writes **Dave Hadfield**.

The Rugby League Council voted yesterday to increase the quota from five, although the game's chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, is warning the clubs not to import players for the sake of it. "But there is a surplus of players in Australia at the moment," he admitted.

"The other factor is that we want to be as competitive as possible in the World Club Challenge. We don't want to deny our clubs the opportunity of signing a quality player if there is one available."

London Broncos, who are not subject to any overseas quota, have taken on board two more Australians surplus to requirements in their homeland, the Manly front row Matt Dunford and Josh White, a half-back from Illawarra.

Paris are also exempt from any restrictions and are likely to field a largely Australian team next season, which will compete in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup on the same basis as any other club, it has been decided.

That means if Paris are drawn at home they will play at home, and will not have to switch to the ground of their English opponents, as has been the case with French teams in the Regal Trophy.

The Council has also backed the proposal for a new unified governing body to oversee both the professional and amateur arms of the game. The proposal for an eight-man body, four from each side of the long running schism, was approved unanimously. It will now be put to the vote by Barla, the amateur body, in the new year.

Swinton have signed Sean Cascy, the 24-year-old Whitehaven and former St Helens utility player.

Basketball

NBA: Atlanta 105 Boston 95; Cleveland 93 Toronto 74; Minnesota 89 Sacramento 96; New York 75 Miami 99; Milwaukee 104 Chicago 107; Portland 93 Indiana 98 (ot); Golden State 114 Denver 99; La Clippers 98; Charlotte 89; LA Lakers 110 Seattle 106.

EASTERN CONFERENCE ATLANTIC DIVISION	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	13	4	.765	–
Orlando	8	5	.615	3
New York	9	6	.600	3
Washington	7	8	.467	5
Philadelphia	7	8	.467	5
Boston	4	11	.267	8
New Jersey	3	9	.250	7½
CENTRAL DIVISION				
Chicago	18	1	.941	–
Detroit	12	3	.800	3
Cleveland	10	5	.667	5
Atlanta	10	7	.588	6
Charlotte	8	8	.500	7½
Milwaukee	8	8	.500	7½
Indiana	6	8	.429	8½
Toronto	5	11	.313	10½
WESTERN CONFERENCE MIDWEST DIVISION				
Houston	15	2	.882	–
Utah	13	2	.867	1
Minnesota	7	9	.438	7½
Dallas	5	10	.333	9
Denver	5	13	.278	10½
San Antonio	2	13	.133	12
Vancouver	2	15	.118	13
PACIFIC DIVISION				
Seattle	14	5	.737	–
LA Lakers	13	6	.684	1
Portland	10	8	.556	3½
LA Clippers	7	10	.412	6
Golden State	6	11	.353	7
Sacramento	6	12	.333	7½
Phoenix	1	14	.067	11

Bowls

CIS INSURANCE SCOTTISH INDOOR MASTERS (Coatbridge) Semi-finals: G Robertson (Scot) bt A Thomson (Eng) 7-1 1-7 7-3; D Gourlay (Scot) bt D Peacock (Scot) 7-6 7-6.

Boxing

The former world featherweight champion Steve Robinson, who fights Billy Hardy for the European featherweight title in Sunderland on 11 January, yesterday won his fight against a bankruptcy petition brought by his former promoters Barry Hearn and Tommy Gilmour.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.30 unless stated

FA YOUTH CUP First round: Preston North End v Port Vale (7.0).

FA CARLSBERG VASE Second-round replay: Louth v Thackley.

DR MARTENS CUP First round second leg: Bilston (1) v Redditch (1).

Basketball

CLASSIC COLA NATIONAL CUP Semi-finals first leg: Sheffield v Newcastle (7.45); Leopards v London (7.0).

Cricket

Nottinghamshire's Paul Franks has been called into the England Under-19 party currently touring Pakistan. Franks, who has skippered his country at Under-15 and Under-17 levels, will fly out to Pakistan today for the start of the first Test at the weekend.

South Africa were 33 without loss in their second innings at the close of play on the second day of their three-day game against India A in Nagpur. India had made 340 in reply to the tourists' 385 for 5 declared.

Football

The Italian player Cristiano Gagliarducci of Serie C club Frosinone has tested positive for caffeine. The Italian football federation said the first test was carried out after a home match against Catania on 17 November and a second sample had confirmed the result.

Thomas Helmer, the Bayern Munich defender, has had his gall bladder removed in an operation yesterday. He will miss Germany's World Cup qualifier against Portugal later this month – as will Thomas Hässler, Mehmet Scholl and Oliver Bierhoff, who are also injured.

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE Fixture changes: Fri 31 Jan: Fulham v Cardiff (from Sat 1 Feb). Sun 2 Feb: Oxford Utd v Manchester City (from Sat 1 Feb). Fri 7 Feb: Sodex v Oxford Utd (from Sat 8 Feb). Sun 9 Feb: Sheffield Utd v Norwich (from Sat 8 Feb).

TRANSFER: Sieb Dykstra (goalkeeper) Queen's Park Rangers to Dundee United (£50,000).

Golf

Scotland became the Johnnie Walker European team champions for the fourth time in six attempts in Spain yesterday. England, in third place behind Spain, the defending champions, were fired by an inspired last nine holes from Ged Furey.

JOHNNIE WALKER EUROPEAN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP (Atalaya Park, Marbella, Sp) Final-round scores (best two scores count): 414 Scotland (C Ronald 68, J Chillas 70), 421 Spain, 431 England (G Furey 69, C Smalley 73). 438 Ireland (D McGrane 70, D Mooney 77). 443 Wales (P Mayo 71, W Lockett 73). Finland, 443 Austria, Denmark, Czech Republic. 444 Germany.

AMERICAN EXPRESS TOUR QUALIFYING SCHOOL (La Manga, Sp) Leading second-round scores (68 or in unless stated): 138 M-J Rouleau (Can) 68 70, 140 T Baiocchi 70 70. 142 M-T Pistolet (Fr) 69 73; M Hedblom (Swe) 72 70; V Bernaud (Non) 71 71. 143 S Eklund (Swe) 74 69. 144 L Ericsson (Swe) 72 72; C Schmitt (Fr) 70 74; S Ferrari (NZ) 73 71; A Torres (Arg) 71 73; J Lee (US) 72 72. 145 H Hopland (Aus) 72 73; S Elliott 73 72; M Burstrom 73 72; S Burnell 77 68. 146 L Dermott 72 74; W Patterson (US) 76 70. 147 N Lowen (Aus) 75 72; Y Mason (It) 72 75; C Orr (Ger) 72 75; M Wright 75 72. J Haad 74 73; M Brink (Swe) 76 71; J Oliver 74 73; K Andersson (Swe) 71 76.

WORLD RANKINGS Leading positions: 1 G Norman (Aus) 10.67pts; 2 T Lehman (US) 9.54; 3 E Els (SA) 9.02; 4 C Montgomerie (Sco) 8.90; 5 N Faldo (Eng) 8.57; 6 F Couples (US) 8.55; 7 P Mickelson (US) 7.85; 8 M Ozaki (Japan) 7.58; 9 D Love III (US) 7.53; 10 M O'Meara (US) 7.11; 11 C Pavin (US) 6.88; 12 S Stricker (US) 6.19. Selected: 27 I Woosnam (Wal) 4.62.

Hockey

Hockey stands on the threshold of a new era following yesterday's vote by the men's Hockey Association Council in favour of forming a new, single, national governing body for men and women. Subject to a similar vote by the women's association, the result of which will be known on Saturday, the new association will come into being from 1 June next year.

Ice hockey

NHL: Vancouver 2 Detroit 2 (ot); New Jersey 2 Florida 0; NY Islanders 3 Calgary 1; Hartford 4 Pittsburgh 4 (ot); Toronto 2 St Louis 0; Los Angeles 4 Phoenix 1.

Pools dividends

LITTLEWOODS: Treble chance: 24pts no client, 23 £79,084.75. 22 £276.70, 21 £20.45, 20 £4.30. Four draws £10.25. 10 homes £45.50. Five aways (paid on four aways) £862.20. Halftime: 23 £17,857.15.

VERNONS: Treble chance: 24pts no client, 23 £26,814.40, 22 £114.95, 21 £15.80. Super Shots £130.80. Premier 10 £63.70.

BRITTENS: Treble chance: 23pts £3,052.10, 22 £8.40, 21 £0.80. Four draws £6.15. Eight homes £5.85. Five aways £179.75.

ZETTERS: Treble chance: 23pts £4,699.50, 22 £14.35, 21 £1.50, 20 £0.30. First 8: 13 £23,80, 12 £1.65. Four draws £10.00. Eight homes £6.20. Four aways £47.20. Super 7 £108.00. Lucky numbers 11 25 16 12 20 17.

Rugby Union

The Swansea chief executive, Dan Minster, has left the club by mutual consent just two months after the resignation of the chairman, Mike James.

The Welsh First Division club Dunvant have registered the Fijian captain Joeli Veitayaki and back row man Emon Katalau, both of whom played against Wales at Cardiff last year. Both were registered before the transfer deadline last weekend but they still await work permits.

South Africa's Joel Stransky will be on the replacements' bench for the Barbarians in Saturday's match against Australia at Twickenham. Stransky, whose drop goal clinched victory over New Zealand in the World Cup final 18 months ago, will be the understudy to the Barbarians captain, Rob Andrew.

BARBARIANS Replacements (v Australia, Twickenham, Saturday): M Allen (Northampton), J Stransky (Natal and SA), A Moore (Richmond and Wales), R Hardwick (Coventry), G Dawe (Bath and England), G Weir (Newcastle and Scotland).

SCOTLAND UNDER-21 (v Italy, Inverleith, Friday, 13 December): C Turnbull (Hawick); D Bell (Edinburgh Academicals), A Bulloch (West of Scotland), M Mayer (Watsonians), A McLean (Boroughmuir); G Ross (Heriots FP), G Beveridge (Boroughmuir); S Lithgow (Dundee High School FP), A Neilson (Stirling County), J Kelly (London Scottish), A Lucking (Currie), I Fullarton (Dundee High School FP), A Cadzow (Boroughmuir), S Weeds (Boroughmuir capt), R Marsh (Bristol University). Replacements: D Ablett (Glasgow Academicals), T Lightholler (Stirling County), P Simpson, J Osborne (both Edinburgh Academicals), J Petrie (US Colombers), P Fitzgerald (Watsonians), C Docherty (GHK).

Squash

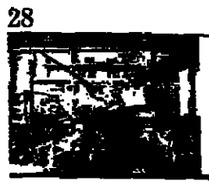
MAHINDRA INTERNATIONAL (Bombay) Second round: S Parke (Eng) bt A Waqh (Eg) 15-6 15-6 10-15 9-15 15-9. Zubair Jahan (Pak) bt Zarak Jahan (Pak) 15-12 15-8 15-12; A Barada (Eg) bt M Chaloner (Eng) 15-14 7-15 9-15 15-11 15-12; P Nicol (Sco) bt S Meads (Eng) 15-5 15-9 15-8.

Tennis

GRAND SLAM CUP (Munich) First round: G Ivanisevic (Croa) bt M Tillstrom (Swe) 6-4 6-2; M Woodforde (Aus) bt A Agassi (US) 6-3 6-4; J Hlasek (Swit) bt C Pioline (Fr) 2-6 6-3 6-4; J Courier (US) bt M Rosset (Swit) 7-5 6-2; Y Kafelnikov (Rus) bt A Corretja (Sp) 6-4 7-6.

ATP TOUR RANKINGS Leading positions: 1 P Sampras (US) 4,865; 2 M Chang (US) 3,697; 3 Y Kafelnikov (Rus) 3,564; 4 G Ivanisevic (Croa) 3,492; 5 T Muster (Aut) 3,166; 6 B Becker (Ger) 2,983; 7 R Krajicek (Neth) 2,380; 8 A Agassi (US) 2,364; 9 T Enqvist (Swe) 2,191; 10 W Ferreira (SA) 2,149. GB: 29 T Henman 1,243; 48 G Rusedski 871.

WTA TOUR RANKINGS Leading positions: 1 S Graf (Ger) 332.0714pts; 2 M Seles (US) 312.0083; 2 A Sanchez Vicario (Sp) 203.7882; 3 J Novotna (Cz Rep) 192.9962; 4 M Hingis (Swit) 179.4706; 5 C Martinez (Sp) 176.7206; 6 A Huber (Ger) 143.4188; 7 I Majoli (Croa) 147.0990; 8 K Date (Japan) 139.6387; 9 L Davenport (US) 138.6510; 10 B Paulus (Aut) 87.7813.



Long-range view
Keith Elliott visits the Bisley gun shop, page 26

sport

Saracen Pienaar
Chris Hewett on a coup for the London club, page 26

Henman enjoys an embarrassment of riches

Henman: £2,500 a minute

Tennis

ADRIAN WARNER
reports from Munich

Tim Henman earned £2,500 a minute yesterday as his outstanding year continued with a 6-3, 6-3 defeat of Michael Stich in the first round of the Grand Slam Cup in Munich.

Henman, who earned a place as a reserve at the tournament by reaching the Wimbledon quarter-finals and was then handed a chance to play after late withdrawals, picked up £160,000 for his win. In just 63 minutes, the 22-year-old Henman made more than twice his earnings for the whole of last year.

"Don't get me wrong. I prefer to have the money than not have it, but it's not the reason why I play the game," he said. "I've always said it's more my hobby than my occupation. It's nice to play in a tournament like this where there are obviously huge amounts of money at stake. But I don't think the way I played today was as if I was just focused on the money. I was just happy to get on with things."

At 29 in the world rankings, Henman is 13 places below the 28-year-old Stich and has nowhere near his opponent's experience, yet he completely outplayed him. The German has not only won Wimbledon, but has been runner-up at the US Open and only this year was the beaten finalist at the French Open.

"I was very pleased. I hit with Jim Courier yesterday for an hour and a half. That was the first time I had played in two weeks so to come out and hit the ball as well as I did today was a big bonus. It was sort of a nice surprise for me," Henman said.

"I wanted to try to concentrate on my own serve. The first couple of games I thought were important, then I started to create a few opportunities on his serve and then I took them. I feel great."

Stich, who has been hampered by injuries throughout the season, said: "I am not complaining, I am glad I played. Tim was very good, he didn't have a lot of mistakes. He gave me a hard time."

Henman went on court yesterday without a trace of nervousness. He had not hit a ball in earnest since beating Greg Rusedski in the final of the British National Championships at Telford more than two weeks ago, yet he played as if he had never been away. It was his most impressive victory since beating Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the French Open champion, in the first round at Wimbledon in June.

However, a month ago he was not even a reserve for this event which consists of the 16 players who have done best in the four Grand Slam tournaments during the year. Henman, having reached the last eight at Wimbledon and the last 16 at the US Open, was in 20th place.

Then Thomas Muster and Stefan Edberg withdrew, leaving Henman as second reserve.

And it was only Monday that Henman learned he was in the tournament proper following further withdrawals by Americans Pete Sampras, Michael Chang and Todd Martin.

Henman might count himself fortunate, but he took his chance well, playing with increasing confidence both from the back of the court and at the net. Even when he double-faulted on his first match point at 5-3 in the second set, Henman did not lose his cool. He merely forced Stich to hit a forehand over the baseline to reach match point again and then hit a service winner to end the contest.

Henman's opponent in the second round tomorrow is Malivai Washington, who beat the reigning Wimbledon champion, Richard Krajicek, 6-1, 6-2. The American is one of the fastest movers in the game but Henman will not lack confidence as he beat Washington 6-3, 7-5 at the Nottingham tournament on grass in June.

GRAND SLAM CUP (Munich): First round: T Henman (GB) bt M Stich (Ger) 6-3 6-3; B Becker (Ger) bt J Stoltenberg (Aus) 6-3 6-2; M Washington (US) bt R Krajicek (Neth) 6-1 6-2; J Courier (US) bt M Rosset (Swit) 7-5 6-2.

France's heroes, page 25

Gough's Rangers playing for pride

Football

PETER JARDINE
reports from Auxerre

Richard Gough wants to bow out a winner in Auxerre tonight as he makes his final fling with Rangers in European competition. Gough is desperate to chalk up one more victory in Europe as Walter Smith's depleted side bid goodbye to the Champions' League.

The 34-year-old captain is poised to leave Ibrox at the end of the season and is fighting against a leg injury to make what could be his last appearance in Europe. "This will be my last match in the Champions' League, my last in Europe for Rangers and probably my last in European competition," said Gough, who has been linked with moves to Sheffield Wednesday and Southampton.

Despite the fact that £13m worth of talent is back home in Glasgow – Brian Laudrup, Joachim Bjorklund and Jörg Albertz are injured and Paul Gascoigne suspended – Gough is convinced Rangers can claim their second £500,000 Uefa win bonus. "We are playing for pride again," Gough said. "People are making a lot out of the players who are missing but those who came in against Grasshopper in the last match did well and can do so again."

Rangers are out of the quarter-final running after four opening defeats but Guy Roux's Auxerre, who will be backed by a 21,000 capacity crowd, need only a draw to complete their Champions' League fairy-tale.

"We can still affect who goes through and I still see it as an important match," added Gough, who took a knock in Sunday's 3-0 win at Aberdeen. "We must meet the challenge and not let ourselves drop from the recent good run we've had."

Gough has known highs in Europe since arriving at Rangers from Tottenham in October 1987, as well as lows in Athens, Turin and Zurich over the past three seasons. In the spring of 1988 he scored against Steaua Bucharest at Ibrox in a European Cup quarter-final before Rangers lost 3-2 on aggregate, but it was in 1992-93 that he led the club to one of their best Continental runs.

Gough captained the side on a 10-match unbeaten sequence as Marseille pipped them for a place in the European Cup final against Milan. "Richard has been tremendous for us over the years and obviously that doesn't just apply to Europe," said Smith, the manager at Ibrox.

While Gough should make it, Smith's selection has other doubts, given the absence of so many top names. Trevor Steven, usually in a Scottish television studio on European nights, is a candidate for a starting place after only six full league games in the last 18 months. The youngster Greg Shields should also play.

Ian Ferguson, Charlie Miller and Derek McInnes are pushing for midfield places but Smith will not be tempted to give Alan McLaren his first game in six months. McLaren has been out since the Scottish Cup final last May because of knee surgery. He will be on the bench at best.

"I've not even had a reserve match yet and the first game is the real test," said the Scotland defender. "I've a bit to go yet and hopefully by the end of December I'll have played four or five reserve games and be pushing for a place. I'd love to face Celtic on 2 January as I made my Rangers debut in an Old Firm game."

Smith's target tonight is another victory after Rangers broke their duck with a 2-1 home success against Grasshopper last month.

Auxerre have selection problems of their own with almost half the team that won 2-1 in Glasgow in September likely to miss out. Taribo West is suspended while injuries will deny Roux the services of goalkeeper Lionel Charbonnier, Thomas Deniaud, Sabri Lamouchi and Christian Henna.

Although a draw would allow Auxerre to go through, leaving Grasshopper and Ajax to contest the other place in Switzerland, Roux says that he fears Rangers might hand over the £500,000 win bonus to their players as an incentive.

Meanwhile, Smith has had more talks with agents in his bid to bring the Chilean striker Sebastian Rozental to Ibrox from Universidad Catolica.

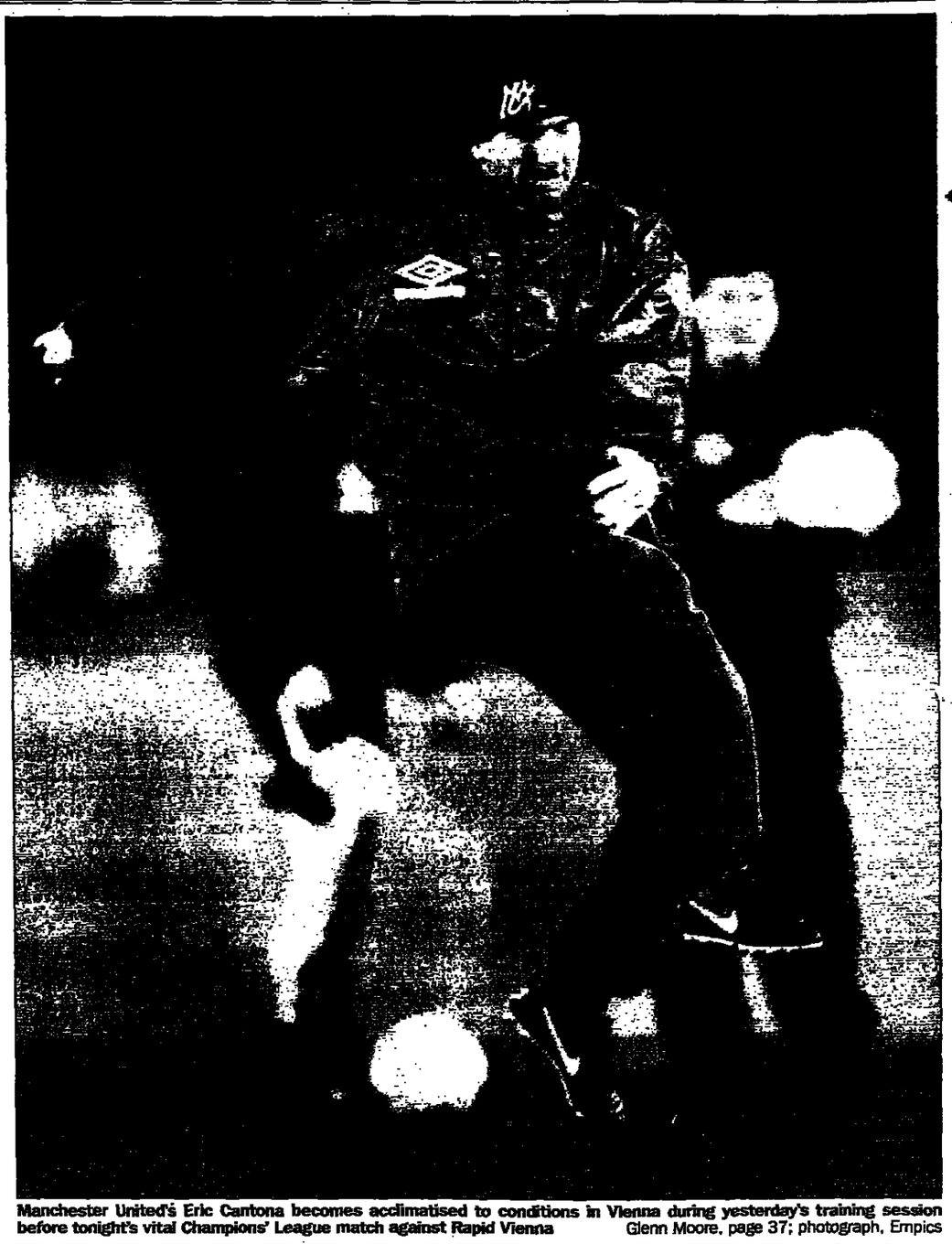
Eriksson at Blackburn

Sven-Goran Eriksson, the Swedish coach of Sampdoria, has made a secret trip to Blackburn Rovers and is ready to take the manager's job in the next week, writes Alan Nixon.

Eriksson was shown around Ewood Park by the Blackburn chairman, Robert Coar, on Monday afternoon. He was also given a guided tour of the club's training ground on a trip organised by Jack Walker to prove to him that Rovers mean business.

Blackburn think they have sold their ambitious club to the highly rated coach and have offered him a £500,000-a-year salary and £20m to spend. Eriksson will now try to accelerate his departure from Sampdoria, where he still has six months of his contract to serve. However, Blackburn insiders believe that the Swede may even be in charge as early as next Monday. Rovers want him to join them soon as they are aware that Lazio and Ajax are also interested in him.

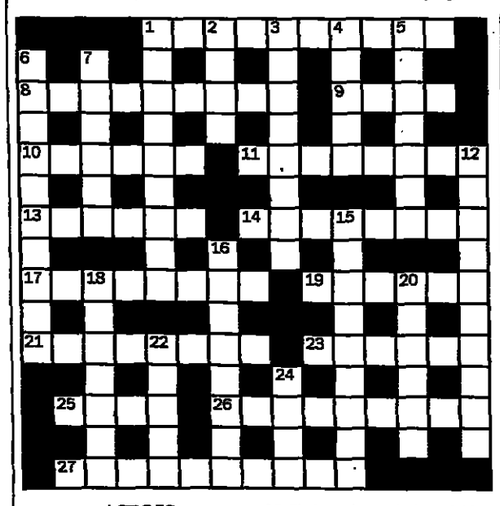
Blackburn's caretaker manager, Tony Parkes, who does not want the job on a permanent basis, has been kept informed of developments and is likely to stay in a leading post.



Manchester United's Eric Cantona becomes acclimatised to conditions in Vienna during yesterday's training session before tonight's vital Champions' League match against Rapid Vienna Glenn Moore, page 37; photograph, Empics

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3161. Wednesday 4 December — By Aquila



ACROSS

1 Fittingly, big waves from perambulators (10)
8 Diamonds, perhaps, as junior fashion? (5,4)
9 Born leader has changed party (4)
10 Swarm has a limit (6)
11 Introductions to Chopin's works, for example (8)
13 Character of O'Neill's cinema production (6)
14 Riding-master oddly against the current? (8)
17 Can rouse into being lustrous when taken from bed? (9)
19 Smooth rock yet more gritty, it is said (6)
21 Twisted vines deteriorate? Fancy! (8)
23 More work in ideal environment (6)
25 Father always in brawl (4)
26 Preparation for the night (9)
27 No promises broken in clergyman's exchange of first letters (10)

DOWN

1 Stock sheet has a tear in it (9)
2 Instructed, say, in tense (4)
3 Surface rocks from work in courts, possibly? (8)
4 Mark left on early murder victim (5)
5 Settle round university with the rest (7)
6 I am game for one show of intolerance (10)
7 Petition approved in vine production? (6)
12 Almost sure to come out in the spring (10)
15 Where we may see the beginning and end of the rainbow? (5-4)
16 Coarse cotton fabric brownish-grey? Agree to differ? (8)
18 Concealment of crime accomplished in sporting competition (5-2)
20 Break first piece of English Spode, carelessly (6)
22 Guarantee states nothing, paradoxically (3-2)
24 Asian connection, we hear (4)

Tuesday's Solution

G	O	A	T	E	E	F	I	D	E	L	I	T	Y
A	L	G	S	N	I	D	A					
D	E	L	I	G	H	T	E	D	G	L	O	O	M
A	E	B	O	I	H	L	M					
B	U	G	B	E	A	R	R	A	T	L	I	N	E
O	E	A	E	E	S	R						
U	P	S	E	T	D	E	C	A	N	T	E	R	
T	E	E	T	O	H							
L	I	B	R	E	T	T	O	C	O	P	S	E	
B	K	E	B	T	E	L						
E	L	E	G	I	A	C	J	O	U	R	N	A	L
O	B	N	T	E	R	O	B					
L	L	A	M	A	I	N	C	E	N	T	I	V	E
A	N	L	V	I	A	N	N						
M	E	A	S	L	I	E	R	F	L	I	G	H	T

Kirtley key to England's collapse

Cricket

MARK BALDWIN
reports from Harare
England 175-9 v Mashonaland

England's hapless top-order disintegrated against Mashonaland yesterday, and only Robert Croft's defiant 66 not out enabled the tourists to finish a weather-interrupted first day here on 175 for 9.

Understandably, David Lloyd's patience is wearing thin. "Good players playing poorly," was the England coach's initial reaction to a day which began with the Sussex youngster James Kirtley sparking off a startling England slump to 27 for 4.

Lloyd praised Kirtley's effort in taking 4 for 44 but added: "Overall, they have a very ordinary bowling attack and I expect our performances to improve, and to improve quick.

"We were too tentative and we should be dominating more. Croft was the only one today who looked to do that. Kirtley has always impressed me. I picked him for the TCCB XI against South Africa A last August when he took eight wickets and helped win the match. But our batsmen are far better players than that and we have to start hitting our straps soon.

"You can't disguise we had a poor batting day. I'm not worried by it, though. We had two gormless run-outs and that's just annoying. I'm frustrated by this display and there are basic areas we have to work on."

England badly needed a good day to their opening four-day fixture after kicking off the tour with a one-day defeat against a President's XI on Sunday. What they got instead was an embarrassment to rank alongside some of the many below-par England performances of recent memory.

Kirtley has been in Zimbabwe since October and for the past week has been helping England prepare by taking a full part in practice sessions.

Today, swinging the ball significantly, he removed Mike Atherton and Nasser Hussain in his new-ball burst and then returned after a session was lost to rain to earn himself two further scalps.

He said: "I have mixed feelings, to be honest. I wanted to do well for myself, but when the Tests and one-dayers against Zimbabwe start there will only be one team that I will be supporting, and that's England.

"I've enjoyed helping England out over the past week and I'm very pleased to have dismissed the England captain. But I would have been just as happy about that if he'd got 100."

Kirtley, a late replacement for the injured Eddo Brandes, last week marked his debut for Mashonaland by taking a hat-trick and having figures of 5 for 56. Today he would have finished with another five-wicket haul but for dropped catches when Phil Tufnell had yet to score and with Croft on 49.

Kirtley could even have had Atherton for a first-ball duck as England's out-of-sorts captain survived a big lbw shout, ran the next ball down to third man for two, but then nicked the third delivery he faced to the wicket-keeper, Donald Campbell.

Alec Stewart chopped into his stumps against Bryan Strang when trying to withdraw his bat in the next over, the fourth of the innings, and England were suddenly 7 for 3 when Hussain did exactly the same thing to Kirtley in the 21-year-old's following over.

Nick Knight then ran himself out by charging back for an ill-advised third run and being sent back by Graham Thorpe, while John Crawley spoilt a composed 25 when he too was responsible for his own run-out.

By this time Thorpe had carved to point after scoring 35 and Crawley, dabbing the ball out on the off side, perished to a fine piece of fielding from Paul Strang after setting off for a suicidal single that was quite correctly refused by Croft.

Andy Caddick did at least offer some good blows in support of Croft, who then accelerated past a valuable half-century after seeing Tufnell dropped at second slip.

Croft hooked and drove Bryan Strang for four and six from successive balls and had scored 21 runs from two overs when, somewhat incongruously, he accepted the offer of an early finish because of poor light.

First day of four; England won toss

ENGLAND - First Innings

N V Knight run out	6
*M A Atherton c D J R Campbell b Kirtley	2
†A J Stewart b B C Strang	1
N Hussain b Kirtley	2
G P Thorpe c Houghton b Matambanadzo	35
J P Crawley run out	25
R D B Croft not out	66
D Gough c D J R Campbell b Kirtley	2
A R Caddick c D J R Campbell b Brent	19
A D Mullally c Brent b Kirtley	3
P C R Tufnell not out	1
Extras (lb4, w3, nb6)	13
Total (for 9, 62 overs)	**175**

Fall: 1-3, 2-4, 3-7, 4-27, 5-63, 6-88, 7-94, 8-125, 9-145.

Mashonaland: D L Houghton, S V Carlisle, G W Flower, *A D R Campbell, †D J R Campbell, C B Wishart, D Matambanadzo, P A Strang, B C Strang, G B Brent, R J Kirtley.

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